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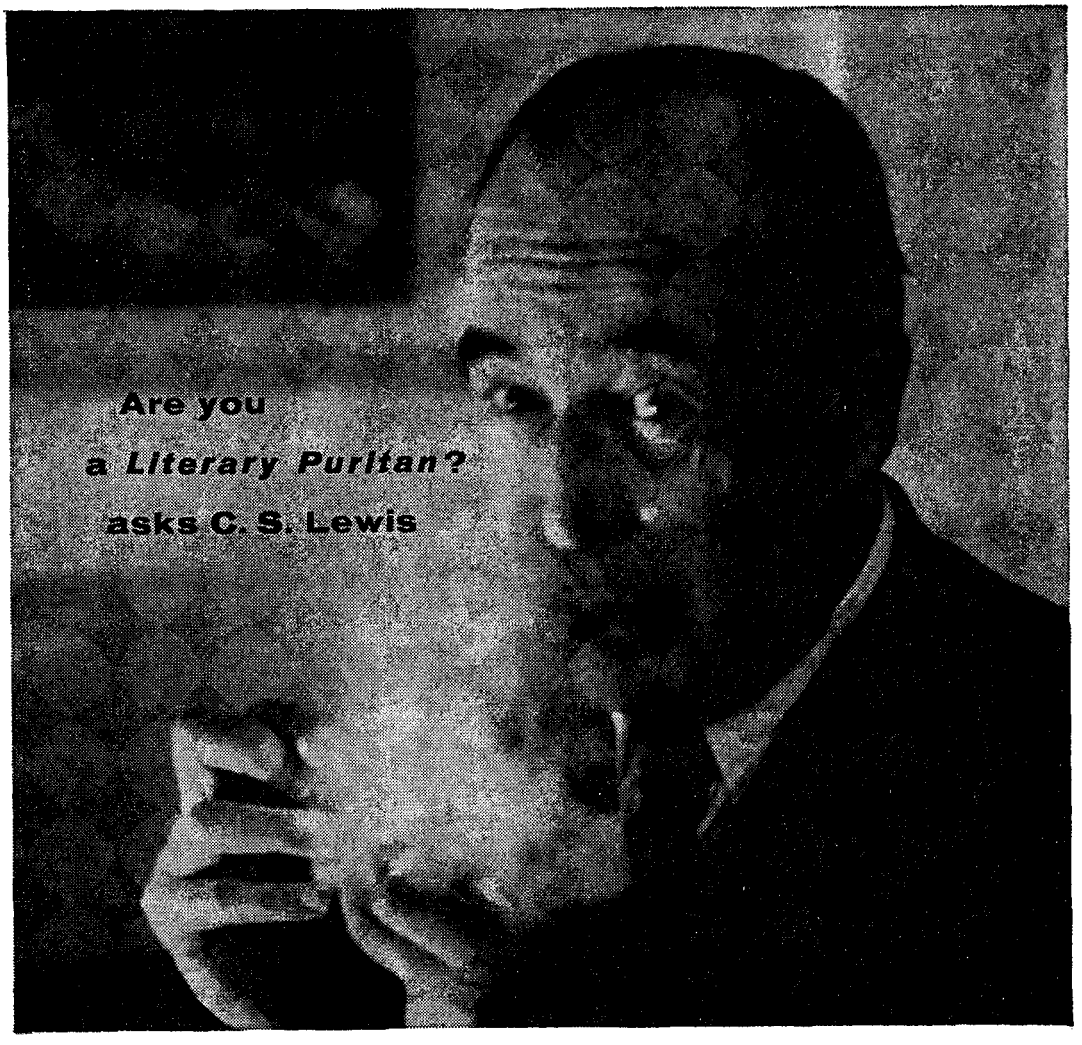

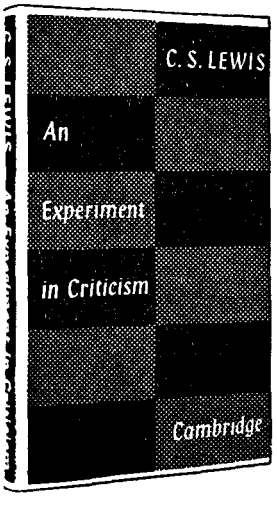

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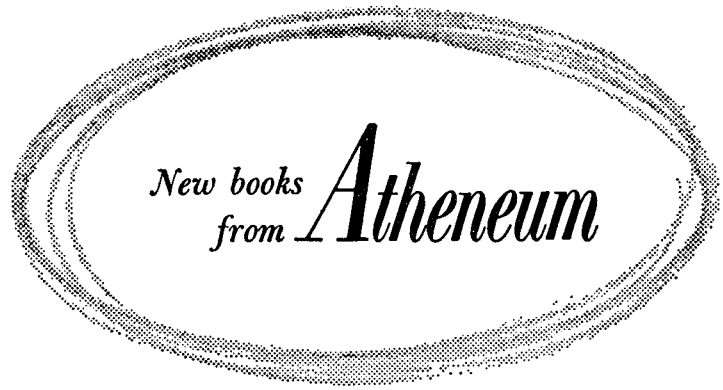

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Dealing with the Russians Over Berlin

DAVID RIESMAN

THE BERLIN CRISIS, in its present aggravated form, has dominated our foreign policy horizon since the Vienna meeting of President Kennedy and Khrushchev in April. Since then, while we have succeeded in once more reassuring ourselves that we are ever righteous and our opponents ever villainous, we have been markedly on the defensive despite shows of bellicosity and what we call firmness, and our opponents, rigidity. East Berlin has been sealed off; the Poles, within sight of a greater freedom, have been brought more tightly within the Soviet military and ideological web; the test ban negotiations have been broken off, the disarmament preliminaries stalled, and we have said we would resume testing in a direct but irrelevant response to the Soviet atomic tests. It is morally comforting but intellectually stultifying to blame the Russians for all this—a luxury one might afford, although hazardously, in a pre-atomic age. To attempt, as I shall in this paper, to show how Khrushchev may view Berlin and American policy over Berlin is, in a day when passions are inflamed, easy to misinterpret as excusing or condoning Russian actions. Unfortunately, I have no influence on Russian policy and can only speak to American policy makers. We *can* influence the Soviet Union and repeatedly do so through what we do in this country and in our foreign policy.

The history of United States-Soviet relations is marked on our

✪ DAVID RIESMAN is the author of numerous articles and books, including *The Lonely Crowd, Faces in the Crowd* and *Thorstein Veblen: A Critical Interpretation.* He is a member of the department of social relations at Harvard University. At present he is traveling in Japan.

For this article Mr. Riesman has drawn on "Facts and Fictions about Berlin" by Erich Fromm (Committee of Correspondence *Newsletter,* July 21, 1961) and on discussions with him. The author is also indebted to conversations with Roger Fisher of the Harvard Law School and to his memorandum, "Berlin: The Need for Political Action," scheduled to appear in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.*

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side by wildly erratic swings of trust and mistrust, of fear and condescension; on the Soviet side, Stalin moved with a paradoxically cautious paranoia, while Khrushchev has been less implacable and also less cautious. However, the American attitudes, drawing sustenance from domestic developments, have borne only the most oblique relationship to actual Soviet moves. Having in the 1920's and 30's underestimated Russian industrial and hence military accomplishments, we were overimpressed by Soviet successes during the Second World War, failing to notice that Stalin's planes were caught on the ground on a June Sunday (despite years of apparent fear of a Hitler attack, and ample warnings from the British, the Americans, his own military attaché in Berlin and even from German dissidents), and that, before holding the line at Stalingrad, Stalin's leadership managed to lose a third of his country and most of his armies. There followed a period when Stalin was "Uncle Joe," when his American supporters had considerable influence, and when insufficient precautions were taken against revived Soviet military and ideological power. The blockade of Berlin, the coup in Prague, the attack in Korea and the revelation of domestic Communist conspiracies led in another wild swing to our totalist outlook on the cold war: we hastily concluded it was impossible to arrive at agreements with the U.S.S.R.—and even if we could that they would be broken, or be merely a step in a calculated campaign for world domination. We were unprepared to seize the opportunity for serious negotiation provided by the death of Stalin, prior to the East German riots and prior to Khrushchev's unseating of Malenkov.

In his second term, President Eisenhower slowly moderated American and Soviet fears, leading up to the Khrushchev visit in the fall of 1959 and the "Camp David spirit." This was undermined by the State Department, specifically by Under Secretary Dillon's aggressive speech of April, 1960, and by the U-2 incident, and the President's assumption of personal responsibility that shook both Khrushchev's prestige and his apparent confidence in American good faith. (Khrushchev, of course, had already had doubts about the Summit, and the U-2 provided an excuse for getting out of what he thought would be a fruitless venture vis-à-vis Berlin.) While the Republicans had succeeded, not wholly disingenuously, in labeling the Democrats as the "war party," President Eisen-

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hower's efforts to make himself the spokesman of the American "peace party" were undercut by his own subordinates and by Soviet intransigence over an atomic test ban in the protracted Geneva negotiations.

The Presidential campaign to succeed Eisenhower was fought by both candidates in terms of proposing more strenuous, effective and, in Kennedy's case, more differentiated responses to the Communist bloc. Kennedy seems to have taken office with the illusion of having more freedom of action at home and abroad than he had. At home, even during the "Uncle Joe" years, anti-Russian (and anti-British) sentiment remained strong in what Veblen called "the underlying population," urban Democratic or rural Republican; this latent pool of ethnocentric patriotism and hostility to most foreigners was always available for political mobilization, and provided a ready-made constituency for more intellectual and well-heeled Right Wing propaganda. The more liberal and internationalist forces, put on the defensive by loss of momentum, by disillusionment, by Communist affiliations and, far more, by false accusations of such, could almost certainly not have elected Adlai Stevenson even if they could have nominated him; the shaky domestic prestige of these groups can be undercut by any Soviet actions that are, or can be interpreted as, aggressive. And the Soviet Union has indeed conspired (probably unwittingly) to strengthen the American Right Wing, by renewed resistance to a test ban (for whatever reasons*), by pressure in Laos and by support for Castro, especially as Americans were hyperconscious of that support and unaware of less publicized efforts on Khrushchev's part to restrain Castro.

It seems to me conceivable, if unlikely, that the United States might have obtained a *modus vivendi* with the Soviet Union in 1953 when Stalin died, settling some outstanding issues and creating forms for the resolution of continuing conflicts. In the same way, it is possible that the Soviet Union might have made a more creative use of President Kennedy's desire on his accession in 1961 to renew negotiations, whereas in fact their actions, along with our interpretations of them, have helped to tie his hands. Great powers

* Compare Roger Fisher, "Should We Veto the Troika?", *New Republic*, August 21, 1961.

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characteristically misunderstand each other even when their ideological and cultural languages are close, and much more so when they are not close. It seems that the Soviet leaders do not yet appreciate how, as the cumulative result of a whole series of developments that to them may not seem related, they have increased American fears that the enemy is winning and must be stopped somewhere: in this process, Sputnik and Laos, Cuba and Gagarin, apparent obduracy in Vienna and renewed headlines over Berlin, the Geneva failure on the test ban and even the offer to merge the test ban talks with general disarmament—all these produce a pre-firing-on-Sumter-like mood.

Plainly, one of the many asymmetries in the position of American and Soviet leaders is that the domestic problems of the latter remain matters of speculation and inference. If Kennedy, through his emissaries, should tell Khrushchev that he has a problem with Congress, Khrushchev (*knowing* that America is run by the elite) may not believe him, but at least he can find a reasonable facsimile of evidence in the American daily press. Moreover, he or his agents can talk to Americans representing different factions.* On the other hand, if Khrushchev hints anything about his own political problems to an American Congressman or journalist, he has no idea what the effect will be on the American side. Many Americans will think it a trap; others will spill the beans and embarrass him at home; still others will gloat at Khrushchev's weakness and consider it a reason for still stronger American pressure and "firmness"; and most will have no basis for judgments of the Communist bloc and its politics—indeed professional students of Soviet society, wedded often to earlier interpretations, have very frequently been slow to understand internal developments since Stalin's death or changes in the relations between Russia and China. Furthermore, Khrushchev is almost the only visible Soviet politician, and

* Last spring I talked to a highly sophisticated Russian, a dedicated Communist, who was complaining about the jingoism of such papers as the *New York Daily News*. I found it almost impossible to get him to grasp the spontaneous sources of this jingoism in the population at large (and to some extent in socialist anticommunism in the intellectual elite) for he was inclined to attribute it all to the manipulators of the mass media and of the Pentagon. It is extremely difficult even for widely traveled Russians to take seriously a popular opinion that they believe factitiously created by the power elite. Their faded romance with the proletariat is still just strong enough in combination with their admiration for power to make it difficult for them to recognize the deep hold of authoritarianism and xenophobia in the American working class.

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what we hear about men like Suslov or Mikoyan is usually the merest conjecture. Indeed, it is quite possible that one reason President Kennedy wanted to wait before he met Khrushchev was to try to grapple with these matters on the basis of briefings from the State Department and the C.I.A.

President Kennedy would be less than the capable politician he is, if he did not exploit the complex problems of Berlin to arm this country psychologically and militarily and to make clear American willingness to defend exposed positions. Yet this game—and it is a game—is one in which he is apt to lose, whatever the outcome. If he reaches a domestically popular resolution at Berlin, his constituents will almost certainly interpret this as the result of his show of strength; and mobilization and bellicosity, rather than diplomacy and flexibility, will be credited with the results. On the other hand, if the Right Wing can charge the President with making too many concessions, the country may become still more alarmed, defeatist and frustrated than it already is, until—as happened in our own South before the Civil War—the leaders become the captives of their aroused followers, dependent for avoiding war on still further compromises that may become less and less possible on both sides.

To understand both the immediate and the long-range danger over Berlin, it is necessary to look at the matter from Khrushchev's angle, difficult though this is, with an eye for his possible lack of freedom to maneuver. To be sure, if one takes for granted, as many do, that Khrushchev wants mainly to humiliate the West and to devour West Berlin, in preparation for still further "grabs," one will try to humble Khrushchev, and to emerge from the present crisis not only with our own position unimpaired but with his worsened. (Even then, however, one might find less suicidal ways of seeking to humiliate Khrushchev than relying on his fear of nuclear war, while acting as if we ourselves, through an expanded civil defense program—no matter how useless—and other measures, were quite prepared to risk such a war.*)

* Combat soldiers are familiar with the phenomenon of "fleeing forward," when out of near-paralyzing fear soldiers rush at the enemy "to get it over with"; nuclear war wipes out the distinction between soldiers and civilians and a whole population may be driven to prefer fleeing forward, whatever the realistic choices.

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I believe that Khrushchev is not so much an ideologue as a politician, whatever Sunday-go-to-meeting dogmas he hangs onto to retain his position and to interpret a puzzling present and an opaque future; that is, he operates on an *ad hoc* basis, and is not impenetrable to experience. What have we been teaching him? Overall, the balance sheet for Berlin has shown on the one side that we insist that we are "standing firm" on the *status quo,* that we are not aggressive, but that he is, even while on the other it shows our West German allies mounting an increasingly active campaign for nuclear arms and an irredentist propaganda over the "stolen territories" to the East. Despite growing trade between East and West Germany and tacit admission by West German politicians that reunification is neither likely nor wholly desirable, West German hegemony in NATO depends on the continuance of the cold war in Central Europe; the maintenance of NATO, once a temporary means to a temporary end, becomes an end in itself—and must seem less defensive to the Russians than it seems to us. In East Germany, an unreliable satellite, whose dictator, an unreconstructed Stalinist, cannot dare compete with the Albanians and the Chinese in provocation and hostility to Khrushchev's policy of a *rapprochement* with the West, the Adenauer regime's rearmament gives rise to demands for giving Ulbricht nuclear weapons or, if not that, for some means of stabilizing his regime. Khrushchev's general policy suggests that he prefers the latter course, that he wants to secure his Western flank, and that he would like to give Ulbricht the political weapon of recognition rather than arms that might be turned on Russia—or might release a catalytic war. Berlin has been the fulcrum for securing that recognition, but now it has become in addition, for Khrushchev as for President Kennedy, a symbol of prestige.

Khrushchev has protested repeatedly against West Germany's rearmament; so have many anti-Communist Poles who fear an effort to undo the postwar settlements. Most Americans (unlike the British) find it hard to take these fears seriously: have we not democratized West Germany; have not the West Germans, busy with their economic boom, learned the lessons of nazism? Obviously, Adenauer is not Hitler and does not want war, but his De-

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fense Minister, Strauss, seeks the nuclear weapons that have become the symbol of great power status, if not of adventurism. Since even an American token force in Berlin acts as a trip-wire for America's full range of military resourcefulness, it can hardly be clear to the Russians why the Germans need nuclear weapons for defense against them; and they profess to fear that these West German leaders will eventually threaten use of the weapons to gain such ends as reunification. To be sure, the Russians characteristically have used fears of Western attack or encirclement to justify measures of propaganda and repression that were motivated quite differently; and the present Soviet claims concerning German neo-nazism undoubtedly have a large disingenuous component. I have never thought that the Nazi ideology could revive in Germany after Hitler's downfall. But the rhetoric of anticommunism can cover many authoritarian and militarist tendencies there, as in France or Spain or in our own country. As Erich Fromm recently wrote, a good many Germans under Adenauer are inclined to gamble that they can gain many of the expansionist ends Hitler sought by safer means—this time in a self-righteous anti-Communist alliance with the United States.*

At any rate, to compel attention to the German problem as it confronted him and his satellites, Khrushchev had the leverage of Berlin, and in 1959 he used it—building up tensions somewhat like those we face now, but less serious, since each crisis, like fallout, produces cumulative poisons with a long half-life in American domestic politics.

There followed the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference of May-July, 1959, where the Russians demanded troop reductions in Berlin and cessation of aggressive propaganda beamed east from West Berlin. Secretary Herter agreed in principle on both points, while there was no agreement on the details. Gromyko, however, refused to guarantee the Western access to Berlin—perhaps under

* See Fromm, "Facts and Fictions about Berlin," Committee of Correspondence *Newsletter,* July 21, 1961. Fromm and I have found it particularly ironic to be put by these developments into a position that may seem "anti-German," when we were strongly opposed to anti-German feeling during the Second World War, and to that mass bombing of German cities whose pointlessness C. P. Snow has recently discussed. Compare *Science and Government,* Harvard University Press, 1961.

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instructions to leave concessions to be made by his chief at the hoped-for meeting with President Eisenhower—and the Conference was adjourned. Khrushchev's visit to Washington followed, an important sign of recognition for himself personally as well as for his country. A joint communiqué after Camp David (September 27, 1959) referred to the reopening of negotiations on the Berlin situation, which Eisenhower spoke of as "abnormal"; and Khrushchev on returning had his trip described in the Soviet press as a great success. At that time, buoyed by his friendship with the President, Khrushchev would probably have been satisfied by the limited concessions on Berlin discussed at Geneva and in addition some tacit recognition for East Germany; such a compromise might then have seemed a sufficient answer to his neo-Stalinist and Chinese critics, who in and out of season accuse him of being taken in by the wily imperialists who can only understand the language of force.

After his Camp David visit, Khrushchev wanted an immediate return visit by President Eisenhower; he apparently feared that something would come up to spoil any potential *rapprochement*—and, of course, something or, rather, many things did. The West German leaders and their American supporters had ample opportunity to make short work of the "era of good feelings." Secretary Herter's speech in Chicago of March, 1960, was followed by Under Secretary Dillon's blunt attack on April 20 against Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence" platform. While the Russians (and even Ulbricht, in a speech the same day as Dillon's) talked hopefully about an interim solution on Berlin, Dillon, while nominally adhering to the Administration program for such a solution, accused the Soviets of poisonous propaganda, attacked their imperialist ambitions, emphasized our need for strong arms and allies, and declared that we would not accept the Russian "distorted picture of the German problem as a factual premise upon which to negotiate." What were the Russians to make of this speech—a renewed move by "Wall Street" to intensify the cold war? They sent an emissary, Yuri Zhukov, to Washington to find out, and Khrushchev on the basis of Zhukov's report reacted with an aggressive speech in Baku, although as yet he avoided attacking the President and took no aggressive action.

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We had insisted throughout—as we insist now—that we do not negotiate under pressure of deadlines; Khrushchev had yielded by not mentioning any time limits; yet we had reacted by renewing the cold war, not the Camp David, spirit. This political embarrassment for Khrushchev might have been overcome, although it seems unlikely, had it not been followed by the U-2 incident, which not only (as Leo Szilard has pointed out) made clear our awareness of where Soviet missile bases lay hidden, thus upsetting the precarious balance of terror and even betokening the possibility of a pre-emptive strike, but also led our President (perhaps under Jim Hagerty's concern for his domestic "image") to accept personal responsibility in the face of Khrushchev's last-minute efforts to leave our President an opening. It would seem that Khrushchev intended to rescue the possibility of preserving a "monarchical" truce with Eisenhower personally, despite hostilities exacerbated by subordinates on both sides (Gromyko and Ulbricht on his; Herter, Dillon, Adenauer and some minor officials, on ours). It probably did not enter the President's mind that assumption of responsibility for the U-2 might carry back to make clear his commitment to the speeches his subordinates had made in the interval between Camp David and the abortive Summit. Khrushchev, in any case, having reacted with disappointed rage at Paris, two days later in Berlin made a relatively mild speech, containing no new time limits about Berlin.*

The Russian people, not at all anti-American despite decades of vicious propaganda, and far more desperately eager for peace than the more optimistic, mock-heroic or trigger-happy among the Americans, had been looking forward greatly to welcoming President Eisenhower as a man, as a sign of recognition, and as a symbol of peace (and hence a harbinger of further supplies of food and other consumer goods). In spite of the excuse of the U-2, Khrushchev's breaking up of the Summit seems not to have been popular in

* Some American students of Soviet affairs see Khrushchev as playing a calculating "Pavlovian" game of alternating threat and blandishment, precisely to take advantage of the swings of American opinion from friendly indifference to frenzied fear and hostility. They may be right, although I myself am inclined to think that this is one more example of current tendencies to overestimate Russian competence, implacability and long-range planning. American actions also alternate threat and blandishment, so that the domestic political cycles in the two major power blocs work by mischance and mistiming, to the possible ultimate undoing of both miscalculating sides.

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Russia. In the United States, in contrast, there were many leaders and political blocs hostile to the Summit from the very beginning: while some Russians may have seen Dillon as the anti-Communist envoy of Wall Street, he represented a sizeable section of the popular mood as well as that of the elite dealing with foreign policy. (I recall being greeted, the day the Summit collapsed, by a knowledgeable political scientist who was anything but downcast; he said, in effect, "Now our hatred and suspicions of Khrushchev appear fully justified.")

Khrushchev's visit to this country had put American militant and jingoistic anticommunism ever so slightly on the defensive; the peace groups were able to make a little headway; if Khrushchev were welcomed by our President he could also be welcomed by many citizens without fear of reprisal in spite of the incidents of discourtesy and booing in many cities. Secretary Dulles' hostility to summit meetings, which had prevented a still earlier encounter of the two leaders, was one factor in the delay of Eisenhower's planned return visit to the U.S.S.R. And in that interim, the general American spirit of distrust and animosity resumed its usual hegemony, and then was able to use the failure of the Paris Summit itself and Khrushchev's behavior there as the basis for a powerful counterattack. Thereafter, when Khrushchev came here for the United Nations meetings last year, there was a momentary question as to whether he would be able to land at all in the face of blockade by the International Longshoremen's Association; and wherever he went within the general limits of the metropolis, he was treated like a condemned criminal. Naturally, in this climate, the minuscule peace forces were routed.

Still, it seems that Khrushchev hoped for better things from Eisenhower's successor. He stalled his domestic and Chinese opponents at the meeting of the Communist parties in Moscow in November 1960: he managed to obtain from the meeting an agreement on a Russian rather than a Chinese version of coexistence. And as soon as Kennedy was elected, Khrushchev leaked hints to American visitors (embarrassingly broadcast at once in our own press) that he was under pressure from the more belligerent Chinese, and immediately, through Ambassador Menshikov and all available

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channels, sent out frantic calls for an early meeting with the incoming President. His emissaries stressed the almost panic urgency of this.

It would seem, however, that Kennedy's whole situation and that of his advisers made it difficult for them to accede to this request or even fully to grasp its importance. Understandably, they mistrusted Khrushchev's motives and feared he was trying to catch the incoming President off balance before he was ready. Then Kennedy wanted to be able to "negotiate from strength," not only in terms of a more balanced range of conventional as well as nuclear weapons, but also in terms of briefing himself on position papers, on the test ban possibilities at Geneva, and so on. He was being asked suddenly to shift his focus from such matters as anti-Catholic feeling in Georgia and the splintering of the Democratic Party in various key states to issues on which he was still selecting his "team" of advisers whose judgments he, of course, would not want to anticipate.

Thus before he met Khrushchev finally in Vienna, various events had taken place on the American side to make the encounter more difficult, notably Cuba and the sense of defeat for the President personally that this experience provided. At the same time, we may suspect that Khrushchev made the error of supposing that the young, new, democratic and intelligent President would naturally see things his way on Berlin and would proffer concessions that would sweeten the delays and frustrations of dealing with Eisenhower.

Khrushchev's own difficulties, I surmise, made him expect too much too soon from President Kennedy and, in default of initiatives by the latter on Berlin, led him to set a timetable for signing a peace treaty with the East Germans. We have treated this timetable as if it were a peremptory notice of eviction, although in fact six months notice does not seem an unreasonable time for political discussions; certainly, if Khrushchev had wanted to "grab Berlin," he would not have given the West six months in which to strengthen its military as well as political defenses.

In addition, Khrushchev may well have been under pressure from his own military men. Events since Vienna can be interpreted

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in many ways, among them by the theory that the Russian generals have felt that, if there is going to be trouble in Central Europe, they are lacking in tactical flexibility and are faced with an all-or-none choice of conventional weapons or outlandishly huge and suicidal nuclear weapons. The *fait accompli* of the sealed wall between the two Berlins would seem to represent, among other things, a final recognition by the Communists that they must hold on to their own since there is no chance of an internationalized and demilitarized Germany—by building the wall they inhibit their own hopes for the future as well as those of the West Germans and West Berliners. Likewise, the *fait accompli* of the resumption of testing would seem to indicate the at least temporary triumph of military over civilian considerations in a situation where Khrushchev has been able to obtain no negotiated stability for his satellite empire, and no disarmament either.

The confusing picture of American intentions presented to Khrushchev under President Eisenhower's regimen not only created impatience on the Soviet Union's side but also left legacies that harrowed President Kennedy's prospects for a new start in foreign affairs. The President inherited in Laos a fragile relic of Secretary Dulles' efforts to build up anti-Communist principalities around the periphery of Red China, countered not only by Communist attacks in Laos itself but also by infiltration in South Vietnam. Beyond all that, the President inherited a force in training poised to invade Cuba, presumably with American air support and a promise of recognition if a beachhead could be held for a colorable time. Any high official tends to create a succession problem for his successor; and for President Kennedy his predecessor's inaction, with its effect of short-term safety and long-term erosion, created a demand for quick, taut, decisive and rapidly visible action. This *mise en scène* led Kennedy in turn to expect too much too soon from the Russians, notably in Geneva, where high hopes attended our careful draft treaty, and in Vienna, where much emotion rode to a single-shot, highly publicized, plainly tense encounter of two men, both of whom felt defensive and injured by the other side.

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Even when crowded or taunted, President Kennedy does not go in for vilification and self-righteous demagoguery. And he has sought to restrain the more extravagant jingo talk by generals and admirals. Yet, in the context of Berlin, it has been difficult for him to make a shift away from reliance on massive retaliation by building up conventional forces, without adding to the militaristic tone of the press and much public discussion. (And this tone sounds still louder when at the same time we enter upon a stepped-up civil defense program which may look as if we expect and are preparing our people for a resort to nuclear weapons, despite the simultaneous increase in our conventional forces.) While President Kennedy, both as a campaigner and since his inauguration, has hoped to proceed with equal energy on the two fronts of armament and disarmament, it is hard for the American public—given the wild swings characteristic of public opinion—to move simultaneously in two apparently inconsistent directions.

The Russians would have to understand our system better than most of us do to be fully aware that the competition among the American military services (which leads the Navy to discover Russian submarines in nearby waters during appropriation hearings) and the power politics of our more strident allies produce an overall result of alternate threats, bluster and confusion—impelling President Kennedy to seek to appear wholly decisive and in control of everything, an impossibility for even the most courageous and experienced man. Given, then, American and Presidential wishes for omnipotence and control, and given also the Korea-heightened belief that "total victory" would still be possible were it not for treasonable softness, is there any give and take over Berlin in which we can engage without risking the loss of Western morale that any seriously felt diplomatic defeat would bring?

To answer this, we must ask what possibilities there are for both sides to gain in the struggle over Berlin, and how we can conduct ourselves so as to make it easier for the other side to lower rather than raise the stakes in that symbolic city. Both sides would gain if the *status quo*—which both sides claim to respect, but both proceed to upset—could be realistically strengthened in Central Europe (whatever the revolutionary dynamisms that may threaten

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it in the underdeveloped world). We jeopardize the *status quo* by refusing to recognize Stalin's postwar conquests in East Berlin and Eastern Europe; for even though our refusal to intervene in Hungary in 1956 indicated our tacit acceptance of these conquests, how could the Russians be sure that some politician in this country might not win an election on a righteous platform of rolling back the Iron Curtain? And, as already indicated, we have done little to curb and much to abet West German agitation for the Eastern territories, often at the hands of German leaders as anti-Slav and anti-Bolshevik as any Nazi. On our side, Ulbricht's attacks against West German broadcasts and demonstrations and his threats to air traffic encourage our fears that a peace treaty between him and Khrushchev may simply foreshadow a nibbling away at West Berlin's freedom and accessibility, done in such small, sly bites as not to give us any pretext to use military or even political and economic reprisals.

Khrushchev's interests in Berlin are, I would suggest, different from Ulbricht's, as ours are from Adenauer's. Khrushchev knows in the first place that the West would never permit West Berlin to fall into Communist hands without war. We are almost certainly unable to *win* a war behind the Iron Curtain to defend Berlin, for Khrushchev could not afford to lose such a war. All that our troops in Berlin can do is to force Khrushchev to employ force to capture the city and incur a similar political damage to the Soviet cause at home and abroad to that incurred by the use of force in Hungary.*

In the second place, Khrushchev may recognize that the incorporation of over a million anti-Communist, Social-Democratic West Berlin workers would only add to troubles of the sort faced already in East Germany, Poland and Hungary; these West Berliners, having seen communism's seamiest side close up, have few fears and fewer illusions; they would be a most doubtful blessing if added to a satellite where almost the entire population is already

* Whatever political embarrassment the Kennedy Administration might suffer in yielding to force on the other side of the globe would be small compared to what the Khrushchev regime would suffer in losing a military engagement within its own domain. It should seem obvious that Khrushchev could not allow us to win such a war—even if we possessed far larger conventional forces than we do; for us to press beyond the effort that would vindicate our resoluteness would be to manifest the same sort of exaggerated ambitions that brought the Chinese into the war in Korea.

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anti-Ulbricht. Khrushchev is not Stalin; he does not like to use methods of terror and to kill or transport populations; as David Dallin observes in his recent book, *Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin,* he intervened in Hungary only when Nagy left the Warsaw Pact, and then reluctantly; Hungary was a political disaster for him (whatever those among us might say who looked to it as a precedent to support our own invasion of Cuba).

In the third place, Khrushchev would like a Berlin settlement that leaves him some control over Ulbricht's power to destabilize the situation; and I think it likely that he has Ulbricht in mind as well as the West in his willingness, even eagerness, to provide for four-power, neutral, U.N. or any other guarantees for West Berlin's freedom. The stronger those guarantees, the clearer the Western position in West Berlin, the stronger are the restraints on Ulbricht. Khrushchev cannot be happy to give Ulbricht unrestricted power to interfere with access to West Berlin, for he could use this power either to make deals with the West Germans or to embroil Khrushchev and blackmail him into giving East Germany more economic or political support. Ulbricht would no doubt like such weapons, for not only does he hate Khrushchev but he depends on him utterly. Moreover, the Chinese are not in a position to help him out economically or militarily, and the flow of refugees from East Germany both exposed his unpopularity and weakened his ability to fulfill his economic commitments under the Warsaw Pact plans.

How much additional restraint on Ulbricht, if any, can be obtained through our negotiations with Khrushchev remains to be seen, particularly since Khrushchev cannot admit publicly (as he has privately) that he distrusts Ulbricht, and since he must uphold the fiction of the latter's independence precisely at the moment when what he seeks from us is a guarantee of East Germany's borders and of the reality of its existence. It would not seem altogether impossible that Khrushchev could be persuaded in negotiating with Ulbricht to force the latter to provide additional public guarantees for the freedom and accessibility of West Berlin, which would then make any dereliction on Ulbricht's part more visible and perhaps a little less likely.

The legal-political terrain in West Berlin may be better than that

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in Laos, but even so it is muddy and awkward for the West. In the absence of a peace treaty, our claim of reliance on our legal rights in Berlin and Germany, when in fact we increasingly depend on our military and economic alliance with the West Germans, will inevitably seem somewhat compromised. If the United States were to continue to insist that we will consider no change whatever in the Berlin situation, based, as our position is, on an occupation begun sixteen years ago, world opinion would probably think the Soviet Union justified in trying to change the situation unilaterally. On the other hand, if the United States demonstrates a willingness to consider any arrangement so long as it meets the essentials of a politically free city with free access to the West, the Soviet Union will have far less justification for acting by itself, and both sides might emerge with clearer rights and duties vis-à-vis Berlin. It should be our long-run objective to work out accommodations with the Soviet Union that surrender no free people and no vital interests; hence in the short run we should not insist on "final solutions" but rather on those that may lead to further stabilization.

Let us separate for discussion the problem of *freedom within* West Berlin and of *access to* the city, both from the West and from the East. The idea of the whole city of Berlin as a free city (as Senator Mansfield has proposed) presents the problem that East Berlin is the capital city of East Germany, and that, of course, in any free election in the whole city of Berlin the Communist vote would be, from Ulbricht's point of view, embarrassingly minute. Still, the possibility shouldn't be entirely ruled out, especially as Khrushchev (to Ulbricht's violent dismay) has apparently suggested it informally from time to time. Various people, particularly in England, have suggested as an alternative possibility that a new West Berlin be built on this side of the Iron Curtain, but such a move today, apart from its practical and moral drawbacks, would seem an unnecessary concession by the West, adjunct though it might once have been to the miserable transfers of uprooted populations that followed the ending of the Second World War. Today, it appears most unlikely that we could persuade the East Germans to build, with Western and Soviet help, a new capital

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elsewhere than in East Berlin. Acceptance of Western aid in such an enterprise (if politically conceivable on the American side) probably appears as too much of a loss of face for Ulbricht.

As against such solutions that tinker with the *status quo,* it would seem simpler to recognize *de facto* that East Berlin has become part of the East German state, and to make West Berlin correspondingly part of West Germany (it is not that at present, sending observers but not delegates to the Federal Parliament). Under such a scheme American or other NATO troops in West Berlin would be there by invitation of the West German Government rather than under the occupation statutes. In negotiating with the Soviet and East German authorities to clarify rights of access, we might consider recognition of the Oder-Neisse line. If the East Germans themselves guarantee access in return for something of value to them, we are then in the position of being able to withdraw recognition of the Oder-Neisse line if they renege on their agreement—and in addition we can bring great pressure to bear on them economically (we would, of course, help indemnify the West Germans for their economic losses in any joint action to cut economic ties between the two Germanys*).

Access from West Berlin to the West is a negotiable issue concerning which Khrushchev repeatedly, and even Ulbricht intermittently, has said that he means to be flexible. Corridors, although they remind us of historic dangers, don't seem out of the question, at a price. But we are in a very different position when it comes to access to West Berlin from East Germany.

I have heard that Khrushchev raised with Ulbricht in 1958 the possibility of sealing off East Germany from *East* Berlin, but Ulbricht replied that it was impossible to seal off his capital city from its hinterland just as it would be impossible to seal off Moscow from the U.S.S.R. By so doing, Khrushchev and Ulbricht could have closed the East German escape route to West Berlin to all except East Berliners who had not already opted to take it. Their

* In an unpublished memo, "No Shooting War" (April 1959), Professor David F. Cavers points out that the West Germans insist that we refuse to recognize East Germany even while they carry on an increasingly heavy and lucrative trade with that nonexistent land. He makes many practical proposals for sharing the burden of trade sanctions—obviously, such sanctions are safer, less costly and less inhumane than military ones.

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eventual and more drastic action, however, had the effect of shutting off escape even for those East Berliners who might have changed their minds if they had had more warning that it was now or never.

It is not clear whether the State Department and the C.I.A. had prepared President Kennedy in advance for the sudden walling-off of West Berlin. While some Americans in official positions were aware of the physical possibility of sealing off East from West Berlin, discussions in Washington have made clear to me how difficult, if not impossible, it would have been for the United States to agree on so decisive and cruel a step; and an awareness of this as well as the greatly increased flow of refugees may have given Ulbricht the arguments he needed to convince Khrushchev that the step should be taken.

What might easily have been underestimated in advance was the impact such a blow would have on the West Berliners, even could they have been assured that what they saw happen to the East Berliners was not in store for them. I am not referring only to the hopes of ambitious West Berliners who have wanted their city to become again the capital of a united Germany; I am referring to the more subtle and much more extensive symbiotic relationship between the two Berlins based on the continual interchange of people and ideas, and on the justification East Berlin provides for the existence of West Berlin (all this is quite apart from the many personal and professional ties among the citizens of the two Berlins). Many West Berliners see themselves as the Americans see them, namely, as the symbol of hope and freedom posted behind the Iron Curtain.

We can try to negotiate with the East Germans so that at least East Berliners have access to West Berlin as before, but we have no legal right to prevent them from sealing their own borders. However we may regret it, we cannot base American policy on the idea that it is our obligation to guarantee escape from terror to all men living under inhuman regimes: there are oppressive dictatorships all over the world from which we are not offering escape routes. Our focus here seems somewhat hypocritical; our intent has been as much to keep score, for purposes of the cold war, of the

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numbers who are fleeing, as to show our devotion to human freedom. I say this with few illusions about Ulbricht's regime which, outside of the Chinese and the Albanian, is probably the most oppressive in the Communist bloc (the Russian army in East Germany gave asylum for over a year to at least one East German oppositionist until he could escape to the West). The American approach here should be based on a larger sphere of concern: how, while seeking accommodations with the Soviet Union that minimize the risks of war, can we best improve the lot of the captive nations and peoples? Eastern Zone stabilization will give the Poles and possibly the Czechs greater room for maneuver, since they can be less dependent on the U.S.S.R. for protection against West German irredentism and against the dangers to their own security of a violent uprising in East Germany.

Even in the latter territory, the interests of freedom were not unequivocally served by a great flow of refugees. Provided he could keep his hold on technical personnel, Ulbricht had something to gain from the flight of freedom-loving (or even Khrushchevist) potential opposition elements, who might have provided a Gomulka-like alternative to a hated dictator. (The East German Protestant Church forbade its pastors to leave East Germany on just such grounds—two ministers who left claiming fear of arrest were even discharged.) Moreover, if we do not think that every loss for a Communist country is a gain for freedom and human well-being (and the many criminals who readily escaped from East Germany to the West were hardly a gain), the flight of whole hospital staffs and production experts from factories producing equipment for Poland and Czechoslovakia was not unequivocally a good thing.*

Such choices between individual freedom and social well-being are inevitably tragic. But there is no comparable tragedy in acceding to a Soviet or East German demand for restrictions on anti-Communist propaganda beamed from West Berlin. While Khru-

* Every crisis tended to increase the flow of refugees from East Germany, partly out of fear that the border would be closed and partly because when some leave others feel that there must be good reason to leave. Moreover, the widespread cynicism of those living under Communist rule makes them believe the contrary to what they are told and hence often to overpraise the West; when West Germany did not live up to hopes aroused in this way, a sizeable percentage of refugees returned to East Germany.

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shchev has not raised this point now, the Soviet negotiators at the Foreign Minister's Conference in Geneva in 1959 did demand the cessation of anti-Communist propaganda aimed at creating unrest in East Germany. At that time, we expressed readiness in principle to accept this point. To the extent that the demand is genuinely based on Khrushchev's need for stablization, it is in our interest also; it is also in our interest in view of the fact that we cannot help a rebellion that might break out in a satellite partly as a result of our propaganda. In such a case, as in Hungary, we would be denounced for having betrayed the rebels and the result would only be a further blow to their spirit.

The greater problem is how to assure a politically and culturally free atmosphere in West Berlin. Here both positive and negative steps can be taken. On the negative side, we can explore in detail the nearly intractable difficulties of distinguishing between freedom of speech and press in West Berlin, which must of course be maintained, and incitement of the satellite peoples to flight or rebellion. Such distinctions are not impossible to make; we ourselves, after Hungary, toned down our broadcasts in fear of again being faced with a revolt where we could not help the rebellion but only lead to the exposure and hence destruction of opposition elements.

There are other means to increase and strengthen the morale of a free and independent Berlin. It is, however, a delicate matter to choose the right means. Certain measures that might be desirable in the abstract, such as moving the United Nations every other year to West Berlin, might be regarded by the Russians in the present atmosphere as still a further effort to strengthen West Berlin, not as a metropolis, but as an outpost in the cold war. It might become desirable to create in West Berlin a tribunal of neutrals, not unsatisfactory either to the Russians or to us, whose main duty it would be to hear complaints and develop in effect a common law of distinctions between the anti-Communist talk and writing natural to the West and the incitements aimed not at strengthening the West but at weakening the East. (In turn, of course, the Communists can be assured freedom for *their* propaganda in West Berlin—precious little good it will do them.) And over time, it may be possible to agree with the Russians to locate in Berlin one

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or another international agency, moved there from Paris or Geneva or Vienna. Once the West Berliners realize that their city is not the spearhead of a crusade against communism, and that their hope of becoming the capital of a reunited Germany is unrealistic and part of a very dangerous mystique, their energies may be encouraged to flow into making their city a still freer cultural and commercial and educational center. The city's prosperity and industrial development can be further enhanced, if need be by Allied as well as West German assistance. The Free University might be expanded and become a sort of European university, even more cosmopolitan and influential than at present. Our aim should be to marshal all possible ingenuity and resourcefulness to assure the West Berliners not only that they are there to stay, but that their city, if it cannot become a nationalistic capital, can become a more vibrant political, cultural and industrial one.

Western imagination at the moment seems to run as much to military as to cultural and political eventualities. Many in this country, taking it for granted that the Soviet Union is planning to extend its control by force, are planning to respond in kind. Like a child who has been burned by a hot stove and decides never to go near any, we have learned the lesson of Munich all too thoroughly, and are applying it in a new situation where it does not fit. Paradoxically the British, who suffered far more from Munich than we, are somewhat less intimidated by the charge of being "soft" or "appeasers"—possibly because they did choose to fight the Nazis eventually and to stand alone against them; thus their bravery is not at issue. Both in Britain and in many neutral countries, the political consequences of America's present attitudes do not make sense, when increased expenditures for missiles and bombers, coupled with conventional measures of mobilization, make it appear as if we are threatening war because the Soviet Union is attempting to sign a peace treaty.

The Administration itself has carefully avoided threatening use of the nuclear deterrent at this time. But knowledgeable writers, such as Joseph Alsop, have suggested that precisely such threats are being seriously considered in the Pentagon. If the Russians should take such a threat seriously, the result might be ominous,

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for they might be tempted to move now, before the West Germans become armed with nuclear weapons, and before our threats make us seem even more menacing, if no less suicidal. And yet, as many people have recognized, the nuclear threat serves to deter us as much as anybody else. For it becomes a wild misapplication of experience to use the precedent of "Munich" in order to defend by catastrophic destruction an otherwise indefensible island a hundred and ten miles behind the Iron Curtain; despite all the casuistical effort that has gone into erasing the distinction between nuclear and conventional war, it would be inhuman to carry out such a threat.

However, as already suggested, the use of conventional forces in this situation does not provide much of an alternative remedy. The best we can hope for is a token stand that would grant Khrushchev a victory by force of arms. If the most serious and persistent negotiations should break down, such token resistance might be thought of as gallant, like the airlift, while any large-scale commitment of troops behind the Iron Curtain would create the very thing we profess to fear: a Soviet victory over NATO. Indeed, whatever one's estimate of Khrushchev's aims over Berlin —whether one sees him as seeking stabilization or as seeking world domination,* or as not having made up his mind prior to seeing what we will do—it would seem wise to contemplate the advantages to Khrushchev and great disadvantages to us if he could provoke us into making a deeply committed military stand with vast numbers of troops in and around Berlin.

These military eventualities seem to me quite unlikely ones, and our search should be for political strategies that can keep the issues open until a satisfactory, even if impermanent, accommodation can be reached. If genuine negotiations over the future of Berlin had been in progress at the time, it is hard to imagine that Ulbricht would have closed the border, despite East German desperation.

* I think George Kennan is profoundly right in arguing that the world is still too large to be run from a single place; hence, world domination remains the dream of a madman, not the hope of even the most ambitious and brutal politician. Erich Fromm has pointed out that Hitler himself did not envisage world conquest, but rather followed with a new ideology the old trails of German imperialism within the continent of Europe and around the shores of the Mediterranean.

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Khrushchev has been periodically eager for negotiations on Berlin and the two Germanies since 1958; the Americans have found recurring reasons to put negotiations off. General de Gaulle apparently was influential in postponing negotiations concerning Berlin and continues to be. (He was firmly against summit meetings while General Eisenhower was President.) In the minds of many Americans, the inscrutable, guileful and unreliable Russians have replaced the British diplomats as the Europeans most likely to succeed in seducing the innocent and gullible Americans. Correspondingly, there is a common assumption that if the Russians want something it can't be in our interest and should in principle be rebuffed. Many Americans also have hesitated to rush to the conference table with the Russians, lest it seem a sign of weakness. Given the continuing misunderstandings this paper has described, we assume that when Khrushchev storms, he is acting tough because he regards us as weak, and we do not realize that it is his weakness that may have made him eager for negotiations, while our delays force him back on his always alternative strategy of violent action. Each side lacks patience, largely the result of internal political dilemmas, but also the result of individual psychological qualities in the respective leaders. But impatience is a self-destructive emotion when it comes to dealing with dictators, provided, of course, that what one wants is peaceful coexistence and not genocide.

It would be politically damaging to the U.S.S.R. to take restrictive action while discussion of the issues in some appropriate forum, diplomatic or international, is under way. By continuing to propose various levels and kinds of negotiations, we should be able to avoid any deadlock that would appear to justify unilateral Soviet action—although, in view of the history sketched above, we must also avoid giving the impression that we are stalling, and that any conciliatory move will be followed by a Dillon-like speech. We must not be afraid to talk, and not only about procedural matters but about grievances on both sides. We must be fertile with proposals, and with possible mediators and forms of meeting.

A recurrent source of delay on the American side, under both Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, has been belief that summit meetings must await negotiations at lower levels that can pave the

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way for potential fruitfulness at a summit. No doubt there is something to this, but the fear of disillusionment following a less than joyous summit seems to me excessive. Whatever may be the case on the Soviet side, a summit meeting is one of the devices by which departures from current American policy can be given serious consideration by thoughtful Americans in the mass media, the government and academic life. In the current climate, people fear to be thought "soft on communism" if they express any idea that runs counter to conventional thinking—and by the good fortune of their mental constitutions, they do not have thoughts at all that, in the old Japanese phrase, might be considered "dangerous." It is, of course, always possible that enclaves of detachment can exist, but this seems to me far less likely in America than in more elitist countries; for almost all of us, even if we do not consciously desire to be popular, are hesitant to appear unsound, weak or confused. Thus, it is possible that the refusal to hold summit meetings in periods of tension may be self-defeating—another example of the postponement of difficult decisions or encounters whose tragic results in connection with Berlin have been traced above.

It is an open question whether the United Nations is an appropriate forum for this kind of dispute. Arguably, the World War II settlements must be concluded by those involved in the war. We have often been tempted to resort to the United Nations to put the finger of blame on Khrushchev rather than to reach accommodations with him, and we have tended to force our own way as in the Congo and elsewhere, not always with long-run concern for the future of that organization. Even as things are, many Americans are also distrustful of the U.N.* What our aim should be is perhaps clearer than the means by which to pursue it; our principal long-run interest is in strengthening the institutions for peace and in making it easier to settle disputes fairly, and whether in this case this is best done by the U.N. or by a commission of neutrals must be worked out with the Russians and with our allies. Within limits, we could accept solutions presented to us by any mediating group

* For some, this distrust is not merely isolationist jealousy of our sovereignty; rather, it is based on the belief that any mediator tends to persuade the reasonable fellow to give in to the truculent one. Undoubtedly, this often happens—for instance, in labor-management disputes.

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more easily than we could those dictated by the Soviet Union. (Today, for instance, we might find it more difficult to accept an East German demand than a U.N. demand for the rather nominal troop reductions in West Berlin that we were willing to discuss at Geneva two years ago.)

Involving neutrals would make it less harmful for us to make concessions, since we would be making those to the U.N. and to the principle of third-party decision, not to a Communist threat. Likewise, the Soviet Union might find it easier eventually to accept a scheme if proposed by third parties than if proposed by the United States or the NATO powers—they even accepted, with whatever bitterness and grumbling, the (on our side short-sighted) decision by which they were thrown out of the Congo.

Let me repeat: it is the sheerest flattery to assume, on the basis of our mistakes and their public relations, that the U.S.S.R. has a fixed and immutable plan along which it is proceeding to our eventual destruction. We have great influence over what they do, and indeed great prestige with the Russian population, just as they have great influence over us in exacerbating the swings of mood in American domestic and foreign policy. In many quarters in the West, the fear that we might give Khrushchev a victory that would be simply a prelude to further demands paralyzes our thinking about alternative possibilities in which our initiative might be more than merely a grudging or threatened response to Soviet moves.

What is perfectly clear is that the policy of meeting provocation with provocation and tit for tat has been a dismal failure since Vienna. We increase our army; the Russians increase theirs. We start off with our Berlin policy in Dean Acheson's hands, talk as if we were being chased out of West Berlin and as if the heavens would fall if Khrushchev and Ulbricht sign a treaty; Ulbricht builds a wall between East and West Berlin. We increase our counterforce capability as well as our supposedly stable (Polaris) deterrent; the Russians resume testing. Instead of acting then like the strong power we are and breaking the chain of aggravation by saying we have no need to test, we announce that we too are driven

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to test. In parallel symptomatic actions we delay the plans for a direct air link to Moscow rather than maintaining these as a way of showing that we can be firm without being unfriendly (a difficult lesson for Americans in public as in private). The result is that, when cataclysmic war comes, virtually every American leader (and most other leaders as well) will have perfectly clear consciences: they could not help themselves; they were pushed; the other side forced first this action and then that.

In moments of greater perspective, the President has made it clear that he would like to act as the leader of a great, not a churlish, power. President Eisenhower, by imposing a strict budget ceiling, managed to achieve a *de facto* form of arms control, although unfortunately without making clear to the population in this country that this was one of his aims. President Kennedy's whole governmental style makes it less feasible for him to use this same lever; but, even as things now are, there are steps he could take to regain some freedom of action, some scope for his potential magnanimity. He could make his own aims less unclear to this country, to our allies and to our potential foes, if the moves he makes toward mobilization could be coupled with measures demonstrating that our build-up of conventional forces has the long-run aim of scaling down the nuclear threat. Now that the Russians have disrupted the test ban negotiations, it is all the more important to emphasize that disarmament still remains our goal and to seek for new areas in which we can work toward world stability.

The sense of despair in the West that is the source of some of the feeling that we must make a "Custer's last stand" on Berlin is an outlook beyond military remedy. It can only be combatted by evidence that the West is flexible as well as firm, creative as well as courageous, realistic as well as quixotic—and it is quixotic to rush heroically to the defense of West Berliners rather than to specify the concrete sorts of things that could make West Berlin a more vital cultural, commercial and cosmopolitan center as it faces the loss of its hope soon to become again a political capital or the first stage in the eventual rolling back of the Iron Curtain. Moreover it makes sense not to be preoccupied entirely with Berlin as the only significant "showcase of democracy."

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So much emotion has been generated over Berlin that there may well be a let-down if the crisis is settled on what would seem reasonable terms, namely, those that provide us with new and clearer guarantees for West Berlin's freedom and access to the city, while Khrushchev emerges with a licit peace treaty with East Germany and a greater security for his satellite regimes in the area that has become his *cordon sanitaire,* and both sides with a lessened danger of war.

We could be grateful for that. But beyond that lies the possibility that the Russians would preoccupy us less, and our own needs and values would preoccupy us more; that we could shed our new form of the white man's burden, our image of ourselves as either omnipotent or nothing; and that we could persuade both ourselves and the Russians—and even, some day, the Chinese—that we live in a pluralistic world of give and take and that, all things considered, we have not fared so badly in that world, even in the Eisenhower years, and that, besides, we cannot change it overnight, even with all the energy and ambition of the New Frontier. It was President Kennedy's fate to meet Khrushchev head on in an area central to the safety and prestige of the NATO and the Warsaw blocs, involving as a result all of recent history and memory and all the allies of both sides. Eisenhower, when campaigning, could offer to go to Korea and settle an unpopular war in a far-off country. By the time in a comparable war Kennedy would offer to go to Berlin, there would be no Berlin to go to—and probably no Kennedy either. Many in the Administration and in the West as a whole have come to feel that even broaching such questions raises the Soviet ante, because they will be taken as a sign of weakness or of recognition of the growing power of the Soviet bloc and a prelude to political concessions. Soviet generals and Chinese jingoes put similar pressures on Khrushchev to which he must accommodate if he is to stay in power. But one cannot break out of this vicious circle by moving faster within it.

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The Planet Mars: Our Mysterious Neighbor

GERARD DE VAUCOULEURS

IN A FEW YEARS instrumented space vehicles will approach the planet Mars and secure close-range observations of our mysterious neighbor. The information that these automatic probes will transmit back to Earth is anxiously awaited by many scientists: astronomers, geophysicists and meteorologists, biologists. Mars is the planet in the solar system most similar to our own Earth. Observations from Earthbound observatories have given us very strong reasons to suspect that some kind of life exists on the red planet. Exploration of the surface of Mars is one of the primary and most fascinating objectives of the space program.

For the present we still have to rely on information gathered by astronomers during a century or more of painstaking telescopic observations. It is on this information that the planning of the future observations and experiments from spacecrafts must be based. Naturally we wish to form the best possible evaluation of existing knowledge in order to select the most significant space experiments compatible with present-day technology.

We know very well, of course, the elements of the orbit of Mars. Because the orbit is elliptic the distance to the Sun varies from 129 million miles at closest approach (perihelion) to 155 million miles at the farthest point (aphelion). The distance to the Earth varies greatly according to the positions of the two planets on their respective orbits; when both planets are on the same side of the Sun

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(that is, when Mars is in opposition with the Sun as seen from the Earth) the minimum separation may be as small as 35 million miles when Mars is near perihelion, or as large as 62 million miles when it is near aphelion. When Mars and the Earth are on opposite sides of the Sun their separation exceeds 200 million miles and very few useful observations can be made at such large distances. It is only when Mars is close that detailed studies of its surface and atmosphere can be secured.

These favorable periods come at approximately two-year intervals, governed by the period of revolution of Mars around the Sun, which is about 687 terrestrial days. The last opposition of Mars took place at the end of 1960 and the next one will occur in February 1962. The periods most favorable for firing space rockets toward Mars, when the relative positions of the Earth and Mars are such that a minimum boost is required to send the probe in an orbit reaching that of Mars, occur also at two-year intervals; the next favorable period for a minimum energy transfer orbit will be in 1962 and the following one in 1964.

The main characteristics of the globe of Mars are fairly well known too. Mars is a rather small planet, about half the size of the Earth and twice the size of the Moon; the equatorial diameter is actually 4200 miles. The polar diameter is apparently one per cent smaller according to many direct measurements of the shape of the disk of Mars when the planet is illuminated fully by the Sun in opposition. This polar flattening of one per cent raises a curious problem. From classical formulae of celestial mechanics we can compute the flattening of a planet of known radius and period of rotation. The period of rotation of Mars is known to a high degree of accuracy. It is 24 hours 37 minutes 22 seconds and a fraction. The predicted flattening is only one-half of one per cent, a figure confirmed by analysis of the perturbations of the orbits of the satellites of Mars caused by its equatorial bulge. The observed flattening of one per cent is twice the dynamical value; the difference of one-half of one per cent means that some 10 miles of additional elevation at the equator are unaccounted for; that is, the weight of 10 miles of rocks is not supported by the centrifugal force of rotation and if so it must be supported by stresses in the crust material, an

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unlikely situation. One of the first objectives of the space program for Mars should be the study of this puzzling diameter difference, the only one of its kind observed in the solar system.

The mass of Mars is about one-tenth of the mass of the Earth. Allowing for the radius of the planet, the surface gravity is about 38 per cent of its value on Earth; thus a man with a fully loaded space suit may not weigh more than 80 or 90 pounds on Mars. This low value of gravity also causes the atmospheric density to decrease outward very slowly and so will reduce greatly the G-loads sustained by a space ship entering the atmosphere of Mars. Likewise, escape from Mars requires a velocity of only 5 kilometers per second as compared with 11 for the Earth.

Mars has two small satellites, Phobos and Deimos, discovered in 1877 by Asaph Hall of the United States Naval Observatory. Their diameters are very small, probably less than 10 miles. Phobos is so close to the planet that its period of revolution, 7 hours 39 minutes, is shorter than the period of rotation of the planet. For an observer on Mars it would rise in the West and set in the East 4½ hours later, thus apparently moving in a direction opposite to all other celestial bodies. From Phobos, Mars would appear as an enormous globe subtending 42 degrees (the Moon seen from the Earth subtends ½ degree, the Earth seen from the Moon, 2 degrees). The amount of detail that could be seen on the planet even with the naked eye would far exceed what we can see from Earth through our largest telescopes.

At its closest approach and even with our largest telescopes we cannot observe Mars in more detail than we can observe the Moon through low-power binoculars. However, the long series of visual observations of the planet by a few astronomers who devoted their attention to the study of Mars, and the more recent photographic and physical studies provide us with a fairly detailed description of the main features of the planet's surface and atmosphere.

The reddish color of Mars comes mostly from its bright areas which cover about three-fourths of the planet's surface. They long have been held to be sandy deserts covered by a silicate dust colored red by iron oxide or some other metallic impurity. Their resemblance to the reddish sands and sandstones of our terrestrial deserts

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was first proposed a century ago by the British astronomer Sir John Herschel, and independently by the French astronomer Emmanuel Liais. This hypothesis is supported by the modern experiments carried out at the Pic du Midi and Meudon observatories in France by Audouin Dollfus, who found that the polarization of light reflected by the terrestrial mineral limonite, a hydrated ferrous oxide, is almost exactly like that from the Martian deserts. On the other hand, on the basis of infrared spectrophotometric studies at McDonald Observatory in Texas, Gerard P. Kuiper found that the Mars dust resembles another terrestrial mineral, felsite, an igneous rock consisting of a silicate of aluminum and potassium with quartz and other inclusions. The physicist W. W. Coblentz, of the National Bureau of Standards, earlier had also suggested that the Mars minerals consist of silicates. Whatever their mineralogical nature, however, the large reddish or yellowish areas on Mars behave very much like our sandy deserts; for instance, yellowish veils and clouds, reminiscent of the dust storms of our deserts, have been observed to spread over these areas from time to time.

The presence of an atmosphere around Mars was established long ago, but its composition and structure remain poorly determined. We know by application of the kinetic theory of gases that Mars is not massive enough to retain the lighter gases such as hydrogen and helium, which must have escaped long ago. Chemical considerations exclude the presence of many other gases. A long search for oxygen by W. S. Adams and Th. Dunham at Mount Wilson Observatory failed to detect this element in the Martian atmosphere; if present, its abundance is probably less than one-thousandth of that in the atmosphere of the Earth. The only gas definitely identified is carbon dioxide. Kuiper at the McDonald Observatory detected it by spectral analysis in 1947 and estimated the amount present on Mars to be twice that in the Earth's atmosphere. More exact calculations have since raised this estimate by an order of magnitude, but this is still a small amount. The results concerning water vapor are less definite; it is believed that Mars has probably less than one per cent as much water vapor (area for area) as the dryest regions on Earth. A small amount of the rare gas argon should be present as the decay product of a radioactive isotope of

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potassium in the surface rocks. Nitrogen, which cannot be detected spectroscopically, probably accounts for the bulk of the Martian atmosphere whose total mass is about one-fifth (area for area) of that of our atmosphere. This mass was estimated from photometric and polarimetric observations of Mars.

The atmospheric pressure at ground level on Mars is about 80 millibars. That is less than one-tenth of the pressure on Earth at sea level, and about equal to the pressure some 11 miles up in our atmosphere. However, because of the smaller force of gravity on Mars, pressure decreases with altitude more slowly than in our atmosphere, and at altitudes greater than 17 miles the pressure in the atmosphere of Mars is actually greater than in our atmosphere at the same level.

The physical structure of the atmosphere of Mars has been analyzed by means of photographs through color filters. Usually, the atmosphere is opaque to light of short wave lengths, in blue, violet and ultraviolet, while it is transparent at longer wave lengths, in yellow, red and infrared light. Nevertheless, occasionally the surface of the planet can be photographed in blue light; this phenomenon is called the "blue clearing." The nature of the absorbing layer and the causes of the "blue clearing" are unknown.

Three main types of clouds are identified in the atmosphere of Mars: "blue" clouds, recorded only or mainly in blue and violet or ultraviolet light and which may be local condensations in the haze layer; "yellow" clouds, visible in yellow and red light, which originate in the bright desert areas of the planet and are probably dust and sand storms; and "white" clouds, which appear frequently in the polar regions and are probably made up of tiny ice crystals, like our cirrus clouds. The motions of clouds from day to day enable us to measure the directions and velocities of winds on Mars; winds up to 60 miles an hour are on record. Rudimentary weather maps have been constructed that are rather similar to those of the Earth.

Along with the composition of the atmosphere and the pressure on the ground, another important factor for the future exploration of the planet is its climate. Since the amount of solar energy received by Mars is known, we can compute theoretically its mean

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temperature. It is about —40° F. This value was confirmed by direct measurements of the thermal radiation from Mars detected by the thermocouple and recently by radiotelescopes. The equator of Mars is inclined by some 25 degrees to the plane of the orbit, a value close to the 23½ degrees tilt of the Earth to its orbit. Hence the seasons are, relatively speaking, similar on the two planets. However, because of the greater length of the Martian year and also because of the eccentricity of the orbit, the seasons are longer and more unequal; thus the summer of the southern hemisphere lasts 160 days, its autumn 199 days, its winter 182 days and its spring 145 days. At noon in summer, when Mars is closest to the Sun, the temperature of the surface in the tropics is well above freezing; the highest temperatures recorded with the thermocouple on Mars reach up to 70° F. in the bright areas and 80° F. in the dark areas which absorb more of the Sun's radiation. At aphelion, however, when the planet is farthest from the Sun, the daytime temperatures rarely rise above freezing. Although direct measurement of temperatures on the dark side of Mars is not possible, there is little doubt that the thin and dry atmosphere affords very meager protection against nocturnal cooling. Nights on Mars must be intensely cold with temperatures dropping to perhaps —70° F. at the end of the night even in the equatorial regions. During the long polar night the surface temperature may well fall to as low as —150° F. To visitors from Earth the atmospheric and climatic conditions will not appear particularly attractive, but in a cosmic sense they are not very different from those on our planet.

One of the most conspicuous features of the planet's surface are the white caps that cover its polar regions. In the course of the Martian seasons, and year after year, they follow a rhythmic cycle of growth and decay. Each polar cap is in turn at its largest at the end of winter when it covers some 4 million square miles. At the beginning of spring it starts to recede, fairly slowly at first, then at an accelerating rate. Near the middle of spring dark rifts appear; they grow steadily and split up the cap into several sections. The fragments then disintegrate rapidly, but the polar cap never disappears completely: even in midsummer a tiny bright spot remains visible near the pole. During fall and winter not only the polar area, but

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part of the "temperate" regions are covered by whitish clouds that spread quickly and conceal from our view the deposition of snow or rather the precipitation of icy haze beneath them. By the end of winter the cloud cover breaks up and the polar cap reappears, somewhat dimmed at first by the overlaying haze, then regaining its normal brightness. Nevertheless, the regularity of the cycle is not perfect and the polar caps vary slightly in size from year to year, perhaps in relation to the solar cycle.

The fragments into which the polar caps break up in the spring always appear in the same places on the surface. This suggests the presence of mountains or plateaus. Another interesting phenomenon is the dark fringe or border that surrounds the receding polar cap and follows it closely as it retreats. This phenomenon was long considered to be an optical illusion resulting from the contrast between the white cap and the darker adjoining areas, but its real existence is confirmed by several facts. The fringe can be seen even through a red filter that greatly reduces the glare of the ice cap, and it has been observed to vary in intensity along the border of the cap. Moreover, the fringe is usually not visible at the end of winter when the cap just emerges from the polar night, nor in summer when it is reduced to its minimum size. In 1943, the author found that the best visibility of the dark fringe occurs when the polar cap is retreating most rapidly; a result since confirmed by others. In 1948, Kuiper at McDonald Observatory proved that, as had long been suspected, the substance of the polar caps consists of ice crystals. The infrared spectra he obtained showed that the polar caps are not thick snow and ice fields, but probably thin layers of ice crystals deposited in winter at very low temperatures and evaporating when spring comes. Because of the low pressure and extreme dryness of the atmosphere of Mars, the icy frost must indeed evaporate (or sublimate) rather than melt. Dollfus has actually reproduced in the laboratory the characteristic light polarization of the polar caps by causing a thin layer of frost at low pressure and temperature to evaporate in the strong light of an electric arc.

One of the most exciting observations awaited from a space probe to Mars is the close-range photography of its dark areas. These areas of various shapes and sizes are, generally speaking,

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permanent features of the surface of Mars, but changes have repeatedly been noticed in some of them. The cause of these changes is still a mystery. For example, from time to time a dark area may change in shape and spread over an adjoining bright area; its new form may remain stable for some months or years, but in general it will eventually resume more or less its initial shape. One theory commonly advanced to explain these changes is the spread of vegetation over the nearby bright areas. The first serious suggestion that some kind of plant life grows on Mars was made in 1896 by Percival Lowell and A. E. Douglas of the Lowell Observatory, who detected seasonal color changes in the dark areas. They appear grayish, bluish or greenish in winter; during the spring a brownish band starts to spread from the edge of the polar cap and at the end of summer practically all but a few of the dark spots have turned brown, chocolate or even violet or crimson according to the French astronomer E. M. Antoniadi who reported in great detail these color changes in 1924. The degree of darkness of the spots also varies with the seasons. A "darkening wave" seems to flow along large arteries, apparently extensions of the rifts in the polar caps. This was once interpreted as caused by water melting from the polar caps and flowing through natural channels or possibly artificial ditches forming an irrigation system. Such a hypothesis is, however, incompatible with our present knowledge of the Martian atmosphere where low temperature and pressure and extreme dryness would make liquid water freeze or evaporate almost immediately. Observations made by the author in 1939 in France suggest that a transfer of water vapor in the atmosphere from one polar cap to the other may account better for the observed phenomena, but how very minute changes in the low atmospheric humidity can induce such conspicuous effects in the dark areas remains unexplained. Certainly our vegetation would not react so strongly or indeed survive in the Martian climate.

That the dark areas of Mars are not covered with ordinary green plants has been proved by the fact that they do not show the characteristic reflection spectrum of chlorophyll as our green landscapes on Earth do. In recent years the possibility that lower forms of plant life, for example, lichens, mosses or algae, exist on Mars has

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been much discussed. Kuiper in 1948 observed that such plants do not as a rule exhibit the classical reflection spectrum of chlorophyll. However, such plants do not spread quickly over vast areas as we observe on Mars. The most decisive observations to date are those made by William M. Sinton in 1956 at Harvard Observatory and confirmed in 1958 and 1960 with the 200-inch telescope on Mount Palomar. Sinton detected in the infrared spectrum of the dark areas the absorption bands of the CH bond, characteristic of complex organic molecules. These absorption bands were not detected in the spectrum of the bright desert areas, thus proving that they are not due to atmospheric absorption. It therefore seems difficult to reject the hypothesis that some kind of living matter is concentrated in the dark regions of Mars.

One of the most intriguing and controversial problems concerning the nature of the surface of Mars is that of the so-called "canals." In 1877 the Italian astronomer Giovanni Schiaparelli of Milan Observatory discovered very narrow straight lines crossing the bright areas of the planet and connecting the dark areas with one another. He called them "canali." These "canals" were soon depicted by other observers. Lowell and his collaborators at Flagstaff were the most enthusiastic exponents of the canal network; they found a very large number of exceedingly narrow lines crisscrossing both the bright and dark areas of Mars. Many "canals" intersected in small round dark spots that Lowell called "lakes" or "oases." The geometrical aspect of the network and its seasonal variations led Lowell and some other astronomers to believe firmly that here was the work of intelligent beings fighting for survival on a drought-stricken planet. Soon, however, other investigators pointed out that the canals as drawn by Lowell were much too narrow and sharp in relation to the resolving power of his telescopes; they asserted that the canals were optical ghosts due to very faint natural markings at the limit of visibility. After careful observations with the 32-inch refractor of Meudon Observatory in France during the favorable oppositions of 1909, 1911, 1924 and 1926, Antoniadi concluded that the canals are an illusion and that "the details of Mars display everywhere an infinitely irregular and natural looking structure." The supporters of the opposite view insist that some of the canals have

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been photographed. Foremost among them is E. C. Slipher of the Lowell Observatory, who has obtained long series of excellent photographs of the planet. He asserted in 1940 that "the extensive visual observations made at the Lowell Observatory have been confirmed *in toto,* and corroborated in detail, by the photographs." Most of the time interference by our turbulent atmosphere blurs telescopic images; only at rare moments of superior "seeing" conditions can very fine and detailed photographs of Mars be made. The best so far were secured with a 24-inch refractor at the Pic du Midi Observatory by the French astronomer Bernard Lyot and his collaborators. They fail to show the geometric canals. Visually a number of relatively narrow bands or streaks, some single and some double, have been seen and occasionally photographed, but at times of perfect seeing most have been resolved into jagged and irregular spots. Hence, while the geometric network of narrow canals does not stand careful scrutiny, the presence of preferred directions of alignment of surface details seems well established.

Only photographs taken from balloons above the turbulent layers of our atmosphere, or from artificial satellites, or, better still, from space probes at close range will resolve once and for all the mystery of the "canals" of Mars.

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Spinoza's Glass

ROBERT HUTCHINSON

the little dust that
frayed the walles . . .

If there were laughter, lights behind the door,
And if she were less fair, and Rome less strong,
Tarquin might manage sleep and hear no more.
History is made of old rubbings and old wrongs.

Elizabeth on her back is wet with Spanish
Fears. "Is Mary well?" she calls. . . She hears
The songs of courtiers dying in the halls.
History is made of old rubbings and old wrongs.

And day, and the Jew has made new glass: Art
Is devotion stilled, all lusts and longings gone.
The dust builds honors on an exiled heart.
History is made of old rubbings and old wrongs.

✪ Poems by ROBERT HUTCHINSON have appeared in *Harper's*, the *Atlantic*, the SCHOLAR and a number of other journals. His most recent book is *The Kitchen Dance*.

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The Responsibility of Mind In a Civilization of Machines

PERRY MILLER

EVER SINCE 1840, when Alexis de Tocqueville published the second volume of *Democracy in America,* which was quickly translated and avidly studied in the United States, anyone speaking formally about the role of intellect in our civilization is virtually forced to invoke Chapters IX and X of his First Book to explain why, to repeat his own chapter heading, "the Americans are more addicted to practical than to theoretical science."

We must be meticulous, therefore, to observe sanctified ritual by reciting, as though an incantation to the gods, at least a few of Tocqueville's venerable pronouncements. Certain of these are worth repeating when we recollect how immensely helpful they were to pioneer champions of the "theoretical" in the early struggles of American scientific ambition. In the long and bitter fight over the structure of the Smithsonian Institution, for instance—a battle which, by the ironic comedy of Smithson's leaving his bequest "to the United States of America," had to be fought, of all unlikely places, on the floors of Congress—Tocqueville proved a powerful aid to Joseph Henry, Alexander Bache and John Quincy Adams in their resistance to the Congressional attempts to furnish only a menial trade school. The victory, in 1846, of these eastern "theoreticians" over the grim-faced "utilitarians" from Ohio and Indiana is customarily saluted in chronicles of the American mind as a vindication of Tocqueville's bold surmise that the then observable state of American culture was not to be taken, considering the nation's youth and immaturity, as precluding in some distant

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future an appreciation of abstract or pure science among a democratic people.

Because I am convinced, after years of being bored with the Tocqueville myth, that long citations from him are the handiest means by which social historians, when expounding American manners, evade intellectual responsibility, I am the more prepared to put before you these hoary articles as proceeding from faulty observation and naïvely *a priori* notions, and as being correct only in a limited range of matters, largely by accident. In this sense Tocqueville is a help to us, much more than if he had always been right. His confusions illuminate ours, as we here move in unorganized bands in the midst of a darkling plain, often striking at friends whom we do not recognize and at foes who in reality are our friends.

On the surface Tocqueville is highly persuasive. Let us suppose, he wrote, that the Americans, coming to the wilderness with all the knowledge they actually did import, had then been left alone in the world, with no further importations from intellectual Europe. In that case, he asserted, "they would not have been slow to discover that progress cannot long be made in the application of the sciences without cultivating the theory of them." However absorbed they might have been with applications, Tocqueville strove to assure himself—if only because he was dismayed by their apparent fanaticism for the practical—that Americans would speedily admit the necessity of "theory," because, being a shrewd people, they would see in it a means of attaining the effectual end.

Or in other words—if I may venture to paraphrase Tocqueville—Americans were at that stage of their development exclusively preoccupied with the useful arts and with the comforts of living. This was not too reprehensible when one reflected, as did Tocqueville, that "learned and literary Europe" was also striving to improve those means that ministered to the pleasures of mankind. But at the same time Europe was vigorously "exploring the common sources of truth." By contrast, in America all the incentives were toward utility. Whereupon Tocqueville came to the happily ambiguous conclusion that, while men in a democratic society are not inherently indifferent to the sciences and to the arts, they are obliged to cultivate them "after their own fashion and

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bring to the task their own peculiar qualifications and deficiencies."

Thus Tocqueville did not quite despair of the scientific mind in a democracy, yet neither was he overconfident about its future. During the short period of his visit—less than a year—he spent a large part of his precious time with Whig lawyers in New York and Boston, especially with Mr. Justice Story, and with such pundits as Jared Sparks; by them he was supplied with several low estimates of the average American intelligence. These informants were so eager to explain to him the ignorance and barbarity of Andrew Jackson that they quite forgot to call his attention to the then mounting surge into technology.

Left to himself, this highly logical Frenchman was wondrously unqualified to comprehend what he saw. Hence, while he was generous enough to allow that a democracy, when it found the leisure to direct a particle of its energies to theory, might prove to have some qualifications for abstraction, he had also to stress its probable "deficiencies." Tocqueville was incapable of grasping how, in a democracy, traits that he termed deficiencies would not be admitted by the democratic scientist to be serious defects. Joseph Henry did contend at times during the contest over the Smithsonian, "He who loves truth for its own sake, feels that its highest claims are lowered and its moral influence marred by being continually summoned to the bar of immediate and palpable utility." Yet Henry himself was not averse to the useful; his experiments on electromagnetism and what he called "electrodynamic induction" were eminently addressed to the use of mankind. His campaign for the Smithsonian did not mean that he would not participate in the national exultation over the steamboat, the railroad, the telegraph (which he almost invented), the Hoe Press. Henry and his ilk did not feel they were demeaning themselves when they pleaded that their concern with a science not aimed at immediate application was really a strategic maneuver to gain, in the long run, still more efficient machines.

As the gadgets multiplied—steamboats, railroads, telegraph—the intellect of the Republic was more and more bemused by the glory, the thrill of the technological transformation. I suppose one may say that we are still hypnotized by the glitter of supermarkets,

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television, turnpikes, frozen foods, bras and girdles, and—especially when vacationing in Europe—by the sublimities of our plumbing. Yet we become sadly unhistorical when we assume, as several of our polemicists do, that the early Americans were a simple, ascetic and pious rural people who suddenly had their idyllic way of life shattered by a barrage of mechanical contrivances. The truth is, the national mentality was not caught unawares, not at all so rudely jolted as is generally supposed. There were of course, as there still are, rural backwaters where the people clung to the simpler economy and there was a certain amount of folk resistance to the temptations of the machine. But on the whole, the story is that the mind of the nation flung itself into the mighty prospect, dreamed for decades of comforts that we now take for granted, and positively lusted for the chance to yield itself to the gratifications of technology. The machine has not conquered us in some imperial manner against our will. On the contrary, we have wantonly prostrated ourselves before the engine. Juggernaut seems by contrast an amateur contrivance; we have invented the superhighway, an impressively professional mechanism for mass slaughter.

In order to comprehend the mentality that still prevails in the America of the 1960's, we must rediscover that of a century or more ago, from which our own is directly descended. The code was even then in process of formulation. The economy was agricultural and a frontier still beckoned masses away from the cities, but then the code appeared. Immigrants quickly learned the improvised game, and proved themselves adept at profiting from it, whereas older families often failed (but not always) to grasp it in time. The pioneers conquered the forest and plowed up the plains in the hope that they too would benefit by it. They were not fleeing the machine; they were opening the areas in which it could operate.

This is to say that when Tocqueville paid the democracy what he thought was the compliment of foretelling a day when it might redeem itself from its base standards of value, the democracy itself was identifying its innermost being with the vibration of this triumphant utility. It would dismiss with a sneer European pretensions to a theoretical superiority as just another sign of the incurable corruption of Europe; it would consider any addiction to this super-

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stition within the native community an un-American activity. Tocqueville, supposing the basic problem to be a conceptual one, simply could not comprehend the passion with which these people flung themselves into the technological torrent, how they shouted with glee in the midst of the cataract, and cried to each other as they went headlong down the chute that here was their destiny, here was the tide that would sweep them toward unending vistas of prosperity.

We today are still bobbing like corks in the flood, unable to get our heads high enough above the waves to tell whether there are any longer solid banks on either side or whether we have been carried irretrievably into a pitiless sea, there to be swamped and drowned. Those who are worried enough to seek glimpses of the receding horizons are those most likely to acquiesce in the charges of vulgarity and materialism levied against America by outside observers, from Mrs. Trollope and Charles Dickens to Simone de Beauvoir. In recent years we are apt lamely to murmur that the situation is not so bad as it used to be: witness the increased attendance at opera, ballet and concerts, the huge sale of classical records, the throngs attending exhibitions of paintings and the guided tours of school children through art museums. In academic institutions those who administer courses that in modern terminology are called the "humanities," while out of one side of their mouths complaining that budget-makers and foundations and the Federal Government provide millions for laboratories but only a few pennies for languages, will out of the other side admit to having lately been encouraged by an augmentation in the number of their graduate students.

Our disposition to treasure these miscellaneous manifestations of a taste for culture, of a publicly advertised thirst for beauty not yet obliterated by the weight of technology, has been accentuated by a tendency among students of the American past to emphasize the minorities who have protested here and there against the majority's infatuation with the machine. By blowing them up to a size out of all numerical proportion to the mass, we perpetuate the notion that the way for mind to survive in the midst of the glare of blast-furnaces and the shriek of jet-planes is to construct tiny oases

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of gentility around the library, the art museum, the concert hall. We repeat to ourselves Emerson's lines about things being in the saddle and riding mankind in order to encourage ourselves to buck against the pricks of metallic spurs. Possibly the cult of Edgar Allan Poe is not quite so legion as it was in my youth, but anthologies reprint his sonnet, "To Science," and students still sigh with a sympathy, even though fleeting, for its denunciation of science for having mangled the imagination, for its rhetorical questioning of why the poet should be required to love this vulture,

> or how deem thee wise,
> Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
> To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
> Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?

Although we read this verse by the light of an electric lamp, warmed in the dead of winter by an oil-burning furnace, having dined on a dish of frozen peas and been gratefully assured with the latest reading on our electrocardiograph that we are in no immediate danger, while we plan a trip for the morrow in a scientific fabrication propelled by gasoline, we not only palpitate with pity for poor Poe, but by sharing his anguish we enjoy the illusion of being entirely independent of all these daily conveniences. Yet in point of brute fact we cannot do anything about their hold over us, any more than we can liberate ourselves from the indignities of commuter trains, not to mention the obscenities of subways. Still, as long as we can respond to Poe we are able to assure ourselves that we have not become wholly rigidified in what Henry Miller defined as the "air-conditioned nightmare" of the American way of life.

A more eloquent symptom of the dislocation between the sensitive mind and the confessedly insensitive environment in which the machines have corralled us is a steady enlargement of the popular regard for Henry Thoreau. To judge from the number of editions now in paperbacks and the volume of their sales, the vogue of Thoreau is a phenomenon that no modern Tocqueville should ignore. Yet, while these reprints are sold openly in drugstores, there is something clandestine about the transaction. By rights, while *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is patently a legitimate article of commerce, *Walden* ought to be bootlegged under the counter. It does

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seem clear that the appeal of Thoreau is not mainly to beatniks who have signed off from the reign of the machine, but to hundreds most abjectly enslaved by it. Thoreau appeals to those prisoners of megalopolis who from him gain at least a passing sight of blue sky. He keeps alive the flicker of an almost extinguished fire of the mind amidst piles of nonflammable steel and concrete—and chromium.

Most of us, I am sure, find something admirable, or at least moving, in this surreptitious adherence to Thoreau. I rejoice when told that in the lower echelons of Wall Street there are young executives who, once they have contrived through the rush hour to reach their ranch-type homes in Scarsdale, mix a bit of Thoreau with their martinis. Also I am uplifted when informed that even in the higher echelons there are several collectors of Thoreauviana. I hope that in the practice of their secret vice, although they shall never be manumitted, they will reach beyond *Walden* to Thoreau's lesser known but gay review of an otherwise forgotten production by one J. A. Etzlar, which was entitled *Paradise Regained,* and which Thoreau lampooned by heading his discussion, "Paradise (to be) Regained." Etzlar was a German immigrant so wonderstruck (as were almost all of his sort) at the technological prospect offered by America that he extrapolated a future that is astonishingly similar to our present. He proposed to bring this paradise on earth within not a century but a decade: "If we have the requisite power for mechanical purposes, it is then but a matter of human contrivance to invent adapted tools or machines for application." Breathes there among us a man with soul so dead as not to feel a slight thrill of release upon hearing Henry's riposte: "Every machine, or particular application, seems a slight outrage against universal laws. How many fine inventions are there which do not clutter the ground?"

Yes, many of us will confess that our ground has become fearfully cluttered. But then we have to ask ourselves, with how many of the inventions would we willingly dispense? The telephone? Television? The airplane? Metrecal? In this interrogation consists the fundamental query for the mind of America. It is pressed upon us, on the one hand, by our Far Eastern friends, who find us sunk in materiality and incapable of understanding such an embodiment

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of spiritual power as Gandhi. On the other hand, the same question is forced upon us by those empires that have found their configuration in dogmatic materialism, and therefore ridicule us as hypocrites and sentimental evaders of reality. They accuse us of being mentally incapable of coping with the colossal mechanism we have devised. They make the issue terrifyingly clear: if the mind of this society is not competent to master the assembly line, the reactor, the computer, if we can endure these monsters only by snatching at impotent dreams of Walden Pond, then it is fitting that the machines take over; it is time that the mind abdicate. A recent authority—significantly remaining anonymous—has publicly asserted that with "perceptron" we shall shortly have a mechanical intelligence infinitely more advanced even than the computer, a true robot; then he adds, "But remember, all this was begun and devised by human brains, so humans—if they take care—will remain supreme." The nervous giggle that his cunning insertion, "if they take care," is designed to excite is all too evidently a momentary release of an anxiety steadily gnawing within us, the fear that possibly we shall not be able to take sufficient care. The essence of great tragedy, Eric Bentley says, is the realization by the self that it is totally unequipped to confront the universe. We might venture that even more tragic than any classical or Shakespearean drama is the crisis of illumination when man realizes, much too late for any last-minute panaceas, that he is unequal to the task of dealing with a universe of his own manufacture. Gloucester in *King Lear* blames the Gods who kill us for their sport, as wanton boys do flies. Shakespeare was even then at liberty to accuse the "Gods." But whom dare we blame for Gary, Indiana?

At this point it may be rewarding to consider more objectively than we have hitherto the mentality that in the period of Tocqueville's visit was welcoming the onrushing age of mechanization. In fact, "welcoming" is too pallid a verb: the age was grasping for the technological future, panting for it, crying for it. Such a reappraisal of the temper of the times becomes for us all the more urgent once we concede how seductively our fondness for Poe or for Thoreau distorts our image of the era. The critical historian must restrain his sympathies; in all candor he must report that the dissenters were at best minor voices and that they were sadly ineffectual. They pro-

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vide us today with no usable programs of resistance. Whereupon we are compelled to pose the question we try to avoid. Is it, after all, the real issue that mind must stand in an attitude of intransigence against the machine? Is this opposition, celebrated by poets and encouraged by the heritage of romantic literature, this flattery of the private self—is this the one and only frame of reference in which the problem must be stated? Is it true that the mind in America is condemned always to be arrayed in unrelenting antagonism to the dynamo? If so, the outcome is inevitable: such a resistance movement is bound to be unavailing; if so, the mind is foredoomed to recurrent and increasingly disastrous defeat. From the commencement of the industrial transformation of the agrarian economy so dear to the heart of Thomas Jefferson, this doctrine of the mind, inherited from a thousand sources in Western history, from Christianity and also from John Locke, has collapsed. If this be all that the word "mind" can evoke in the modern situation, to what then have we to cling, as we find ourselves upon the wastes of matter, but the floating fragments of Poe's poetry, of Thoreau's individualism and odd bits and pieces of Henry Adams, Veblen and Randolph Bourne?

Or else must we cultivate what Thoreau scorned as resignation? Whereupon we admit that human existence is incurably shabby, that it is merely another evidence of the operation of inherent depravity, that the terrors of the machine can be withstood only by a delicious few anchored in religion. There is abundant evidence that to many this option appears the only way out. These anchorites will resent my describing their clause as one of escape. They insist that by their reinvigoration of spiritual resources the mind will be fortified against the thrusts of the material, will subdue the inhuman to humanity. However, the most energetic of modern Protestant thinking—I have in mind Reinhold Niebuhr's—hardly lets us off the hook. Catholicism does indeed have the majestic order of the historic Church; yet, so far as I can follow them, individual Catholics are as perturbed as the rest of us. Without entering further into a highly complex area, let me simply assert that an over-all examination of American history from about 1815 gives no support to any contention that the religious solution is workable for more than a few votaries of particular persuasions.

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In the early nineteenth century the loud hosannas of the revivalists were as much swamped by the swelling chorus of praise for the machine as were the drawling sarcasms of Henry Thoreau. If we wish to locate where in the dominant theme of American culture the prospect of a healthy relation of mind to machine arose, and where it assumed the character that has subsequently ruled our society—disregarding the whimpers of humanists, religionists, agrarians and poets—we must pass over names of literary or ecclesiastical repute. We are obligated, for instance, to resurrect an address of Charles J. Ingersoll to the American Institute of Philadelphia in November, 1835:

> Even in Europe . . . this is the era of utility. With us it is the age of navigation, plantation, habitation, and transportation, of steamboats, canals, and railroads, magnificent prisons, costly poor-houses, school-houses, custom-houses, court-houses, warehouses, factories, forges, laboratories, and all the contrivances of ingenuity.

If this does not adequately convey wherein the majority of Americans conceived their future to lie, let me further illustrate the lesson by repeating what Henry Meigs proclaimed upon the opening of the Annual Fair at Albany in 1850:

> All over our great domain we hear the ceaseless hum of human and machine labor. The latter has become in our time the object of wonder. We are almost as much astonished at modern inventions, as our Indians were at the ships and artillery of Columbus. By the constant habit of observation, and with entire self-reliance, and with a liberty which has no other boundaries than those which morality and religion impose, the freemen of our country will carry to the uttermost perfection all the arts that can be useful or agreeable to man.

Now, as I trust is clear, I am not arguing that in the record of creative intellect Henry Meigs is to be placed on a level with Henry Thoreau. Nevertheless, the fact remains: Meigs spoke for the community, and Thoreau did not. Thoreau spoke for himself, but not for Pittsburgh.

Further, men like Meigs were not uncultured. They were certain that when orating in this vein they were not becoming Philistine barbarians. They marvelled at the machine, but they took full responsibility. Never did any weird notion that the machine might someday dominate the men cross their minds. There was indeed

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some uneasiness throughout the country—not confined to "radical" circles—that the workers (or the "operatives" as was then the word) might be victimized. But this resulted in a determination that American industry had no need to follow the course of the English, that it resolutely should not. Thoreau again spoke the extreme concern:

> The condition of the operatives is becoming every day more like that of the English; and it cannot be wondered at, since, as I have heard or observed, the principal object is, not that mankind may be well and honestly clad, but, unquestionably, that the corporations may be enriched.

Again, Thoreau alerts our attention, where Meigs merely bores us. But the Meigses of his time (I suppose plenty of them survive in today's Chambers of Commerce) would have seen in Thoreau's passage, had they ever noticed it, only further proof of Thoreau's irresponsibility. Emerson also had moments of asking whether the machines might not damage the workers; but he, unlike Thoreau, was so in tune with his times as to be able to banish such apprehensions and to say in resounding amplitude, "Machinery and Transcendentalism agree well. Stage-Coach and Railroad are bursting the old legislation like green withes." His essay "Napoleon" in *Representative Men,* although at the end it brings to bear the same pompous moral judgment on the man of action that finds Shakespeare guilty of frivolity, is in substance his love letter to the entrepreneurs, to the practical men who brushed aside the "old legislation" and were building railroads.

Likewise Theodore Parker, the professional reformer pitching into every cause that offered itself, was worried about the condition of the laboring classes; however, he even more than Thoreau was the Yankee handy with tools, and to him the machines in themselves were as much objects of sheer beauty as to Francis Cabot Lowell. Parker hailed the factory as a creation of intellect. The observer of a carpet manufactory, he said, departs "wondering, thinking what a head it must be which planned the mill, a tool by which the Merrimack transfigures wool and dye stuff into handsome carpets, serviceable for chamber, parlor, staircase, or meeting-house." Occasionally the Old Testament prophet strain in Parker would predict that just so soon as the machine threatened to afford workers the leisure

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for intellectual relaxation, the bosses would invent markets for useless luxuries in order to keep their employees tied to a fourteen-hour-a-day regime. Yet these utterances came easily when he was tongue-lashing the Boston industrialists, several of whom came to his meetings in the Melodeon and helped pay his salary in order to be lashed. When, by contrast, Parker wanted to array the strength and virtue of his region against what for him was the supremely monstrous evil of the century, Negro slavery, he had no hesitation in telling Southerners that they, hamstrung by this iniquity, could never develop the exquisite machines that made New England almost such a paradise as Etzlar had foretold:

> While South Carolina has taken men from Africa, and made them slaves, New England has taken possession of the Merrimack, the Connecticut, the Androscoggin, the Kennebeck, the Penobscot, and a hundred smaller streams. She has caught the lakes of New Hampshire, and holds them in thrall.

Thus inspired, Parker would promise that "the machinery" of the free states would outproduce the three million bondsmen of the South. Although he, dying of exhaustion in 1860, did not live to see the Civil War prove his thesis, hundreds of his admirers, those who did not perish in the demonstration, did so perceive it and pointedly included his sagacity in their encomiums. In those respects the reformer Parker was not at all out of step with what some historians term the "conservative" temper of his age. He would fully have applauded, as would have all except a few grumblers like Thoreau, a paragraph that another Meigs, this one J. Aitken Meigs, spoke in Philadelphia on July 13, 1854:

> Such is the general picture; examine it more carefully for a moment. See how true children of the sun, heat, light and electricity have been delivered into the hands of man, as bondservants, obedient to his call. . . . With consummate skill the marriage of water and heat was effected. The child of that marriage has grown to be a herculean aid to onward-moving humanity. Certainly steam is a benefactor to the race. The printing press and the electric telegraph have become the handmaids of thought.

"Bondservants!" "Handmaids!" There we have it, the veritable American religion! Such assertions that machines had become creatures of the mind were customarily followed, as with Meigs, by the

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substantiating proposition that in turn they would obligingly prove to be assistants to the intellect. They would further the empire of "intellect," they would add trophies to its dominion, they would be dutiful and obedient. As early as 1817, for instance, when the industrial revolution in the northeastern states had barely commenced, a society was formed for the encouragement of domestic manufactures, not, according to its own profession, because of the assurance of profit (as Henry Thoreau would insinuate), but in the cause of intellectual fulfillment. "The exhaustless stores of mind and matter shall be this nation's treasury."

When therefore, we must ask ourselves, do glowing periods in this optimistic strain begin to excite in our breast only a languid pity for those simple decades, or else a bitter resentment at having been so cheaply betrayed? Why do I discover when addressing a classroom loaded with the heirs of industry and with future vice presidents that the mordant aphorisms of Thoreau are greeted with an appreciative recognition, while the prognostications of industrial bliss are heard with an obvious subsiding of enthusiasm? Surely it is not that these youths are actively in revolt against the machine, like the rick-burners of Wellington's England. On the contrary, we all live by means of several hundred more apparatuses, of increasingly vaster scale, than either of the Meigses could have imagined. And nobody doubts that these instruments require intelligence to design, intelligence to construct and even more intelligence to improve. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is a citadel of the mind in America, if any bastion is. Whence, then, comes this insecurity, which my title assumes is everywhere recognizable? Where, when and above all how did the mind of this fabulously successful enterprise become darkened with a dread that its jinni—summoned not out of a magic bottle but from a supposedly rational conjunction of the test tube, the wind tunnel, the steam shovel and sweet Professor Einstein's equation—would become its mortal enemy?

The most obvious answer is that millions of Americans, more than enough to win an election, have only vague notions, barely restive worries, as to the existence of any such enmity. The less obvious but more terrible fact is that they have no slightest sense of responsibility for any bifurcation of which they cannot conceive.

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They dwell in a mental fog of perpetual neutralism. They remain there despite reports of children burned to death in what newspapers euphemistically call "tenements," despite the disintegration of urban transportation, despite the increase of murders and disfigurements on our highways, despite the criminal pollution of the very air we breathe. Yet after countless tirades on dangers such as these have left the public staring in blank incomprehension, we further have to confront, as have many frustrated scientists, the massive indifference of the populace, most of them supplied with a standard set of human emotions, to the ultimate meaning of a war conducted through the mysteries of nuclear physics.

Can it be that a father is incapable of grief for the daughter miserably crushed in an "accident" on Route 999? Do children in a burning tenement not suffer all the agonies of Joan of Arc? And we all have been told, by John Hersey and by the Bombing Survey, what an atomic blast does to our love-life, our libraries, our galleries, our universities, to our fragile oases as well as to military installations. Except that in this department we are reliably informed that Hiroshima was child's play; the next bomb will obliterate consciousness itself. We have no choice but to consent, and so go dumbly down the appointed runways as do cattle in the stockyards.

How did the disseverance come about? This question is widely debated among historians, sociologists, psychologists and the more conscientious of physicists. In American historiography the fashion has become to regard *The Education of Henry Adams* as the tocsin of alarm, even though none heard any fire bell when the book was first printed in a private edition in 1907. When it was released to the public, in 1918, it surprisingly became a best-seller, possibly indicating that it by then found a partially disturbed audience. Yet the relation of the work to the current frame of the public mind is a baffling business. My late colleague, Thomas Reed Powell of the Harvard Law School, used to growl that the title of Adams' autobiography ought, in loyalty to its content, to be "The Unfortunate Relation of the Universe to Me." If this be so, and many equally exasperated with Adams' conceit and attitudinizing think it is so, the *Education* is the reverse of Mr. Bentley's definition of tragedy.

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Therefore it has upon the mind of the present, especially upon the minds of students for whom Adams is prescribed reading in college surveys, a dulling instead of an arousing effect.

Let us grant all this. It remains a fact that Adams endeavored to concentrate on the dynamo as the master engine—the archengine, shall we say?—of the twentieth century. But in the operation of a dynamo there remains a vestige of human responsibility: at least the engineer can, when it threatens to get out of hand, pull a switch. Yet Adams was sensitive enough, or neurotic enough, to read through the dynamo to the void beyond it: "In plain words, Chaos was the law of nature, Order was the dream of man."

I know some will object, and I heartily go along with their insistence, that a contemporary physicist so thoroughly trained in his métier as to be able still further to "improve" our bombs must be convinced that he manipulates not a chaos but some sort of order. This realm is so minuscule, so imperceptible by even the most powerful of microscopes, that it can be calculated only by a sign language that is a scandal to traditional norms of human reason; even so it has, according to these high priests, enough coherence of its own to enable their minds, if not ours, to produce tangible results in more and more lethal explosions.

This may be the insoluble conundrum of the epistemology with which we have to live—or perish. It would work extremely well if we were medieval serfs allowed an occasional glimpse of a Mass, the mysteries of which we were assured were beyond our comprehension. The odd circumstance is that in our case the hierophants have striven to divest themselves of the mystery, to account for themselves in the language of laymen, and have subsided into sorrow when obliged to confess that they cannot interpret physics to any but fellow technicians. Henry Adams was brought to the abyss by a sentence of Karl Pearson's: "In the chaos behind sensations, in the 'beyond' of sense-impressions, we cannot infer necessity, order or routine, for these are concepts formed by the mind of man on this side of sense-impressions." If at the beginning of our century—now seemingly as remote as the age of Voltaire—a responsible scientist warned the common-sense intelligence that it could not follow these lines of investigation past the barriers of sense impres-

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sions, and so would have to crouch outside the gates, hugging its cold and empty jars of order and law, how much more crushing is the exclusion when a J. Robert Oppenheimer says flatly that the working principles of modern physics cannot be translated into the discourse of logic, or when a C. P. Snow concludes that the scientists and the humanists can no longer speak a common language! If this has been the true, and the deceptive, course of history in our time, only one conclusion is left: the mind, as our Western culture has conceived it since the antiquity of Thales, is cut adrift. It is not even shut up, as Emerson feared Kantian Idealism would confine it, in the splendid labyrinth of its subjective perceptions. It can behold splendors and colors to its heart's content; but that is an irrelevant game, less related to the actual universe than whist or baseball. There is no point in rigorously subjecting the self to the ascetic discipline of Walden Pond; nothing is to be gained that way any more than through an afternoon at the stadium. The mind, as men in general know it, and through which they have tried to manage their universe, is no longer responsible for anything, least of all for the destruction of its own species.

This attitude, somehow communicated to the least reflective of our population, shows itself repeatedly in our dealings with our machines. Everyone who starts a drive in his automobile assumes that the collision will not happen to him. Otherwise he would never take his car out of the garage. The commuter notes in the headlines of his morning papers the number of the dead in a tenement fire and turns hastily to the sports page, meekly grateful that he has so much as a train to ride in. Yet within these areas the assuring consolation persists that even the average mind of the citizenry *could,* if worse came to worst, learn the mechanism of the internal combustion engine and so mitigate the holocausts on the roads during holiday weekends. The collective intelligence *might* frame and see enforced decent zoning laws. The fact that these attainments are as yet neglected by the great American public seems no reason for accusing the machines. I am told that a Broadway producer, having read a script about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah submitted to him by an aspiring young playwright, mused that he did not see how there could have been so much sin in communities that

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had no telephones. Here we are in a field where the invention itself does not have to assume full responsibility for human fallibility.

But if in an age of machines and of helpful gadgets our propensity be nourished to live with less and less understanding of all that we ought to comprehend, what happens when our debilitated faculty is told that it has to live under the shadow of nuclear weapons that by their very nature defy the few lingering canons of rationality?

Virtually all reports on the general behavior of Americans add up, so far, to a pattern of further and further regression into the womb of irresponsibility. There is everywhere documented a refusal to accept what I would hopefully term adult status. I shall construct a dialectic too simplified to suit any social scientist, but roughly it appears to run something like this. First, because there is nothing this or that particular individual can do to prevent the bombs from falling, then, if they do fall, the fault is none of his. Although they be launched by man-made missiles or dropped from man-made jets, and although man be exterminated, he remains morally immune, an innocent victim of the machine. Second, if, as several analysts assure us, the threat of mutual obliteration will itself keep the bombs from falling—as it prevented the use of poison gas in the last war—then our citizen can also claim that the fault is none of his. These may be the sheer alternatives with which we are confronted; there would seem to be no third recourse.

Well, that predicament is dire enough. But I see how no one, in the light of the historical development that I have sketchily indicated and in which, as I have endeavored to suggest, we are all involved, can with self-respect complain about the situation in which we find ourselves, since we have all done our utmost, knowingly or inadvertently, to produce it.

Obviously we cannot turn the clock back to the idyllic industrialism of Theodore Parker. What, then, can we say? We may say that without recourse to romantic isolationism we are able to resist, and will resist, the paralyzing effects upon the intellect of the looming nihilism of what was formerly the scientific promise of mechanical bliss. Scientists and humanists are today joined in their appreciation of the urgencies, and of the difficulties, of the consultation.

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Upon all of us, whoever we be, rests the responsibility of securing a hearing from an audience either dazzled into dumb amazement by the prestige of technology or else lulled into apathy by the apparently soothing but actually insidious triumphs of functional science.

Supposing that my analysis has any validity, then at the end of it we come, by cumbersome indirection, to the problem of the officially designated "humanities" in a civilization conducted amidst machines. I have tried not to put this cause in the center of the picture, for, as I have suggested, it does not belong there. Most of the keening over administrative slighting of the humanities has as little relevance to the main stream of historical movement as did Thoreau's magnificent tirades from the shore of Walden Pond. Except, of course, that not much of the modern complaint reaches Thoreau's eloquence or wit. Nothing is to be gained by acknowledging in advance a purely ornamental function, or by proclaiming an inutility for which compensation is to be found in "poetry," in order to demand a shelter for the arts within a capitalist order.

The Cassandras of our time have exaggerated the danger when they cry, "Woe! woe! the scientists and the humanists can no longer converse!" Sir Charles Snow is a salutary sort of Cassandra, because he is not hysterical, and furthermore is living proof that the dialogue can be conducted. So a conversation is possible; in the basic sense, the humanist and the scientist are both on the same side of the barricade. It is not required every time a historian and a chemist meet for lunch that each impart to the other the sum and substance of his erudition. It is only required that they respect in each other an achievement of "mind." Baseball is endlessly fascinating, but it need not be the sole noncontroversial diversion when intellect meets intellect.

If such reflections have relevance for conclaves of scholars, they have an even greater importance for our relations to the public, albeit the amorphous, mind. In this direction the scientists, or at least the students of science, have lately been doing the better job. Admit that they have an immense prestige to support them, and that in a paradoxical sense the incommunicableness of their mystery is an incentive for attempting to communicate; they have addressed the public in various degrees of agonized clarity and, to that extent,

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they have builded dikes against the flux of irresponsibility. By contrast the humanities have, I must confess, not functioned so effectively, despite the media offered by FM radios and by paperbacks. Under the large rubric of humanities, in this indictment, I include not only writers on history and literature, but social scientists, political scientists and even, although grudgingly, economists. Despite the protests of many of these that they do communicate with the public, it is in such areas that the analysis of the mind in America has itself been undergoing a fragmentation into theses and monographs. These productions are intellectually respectable, but too often they add up to a tiresome jumble. They become a disease, and the endeavor to check the disease oddly enough turns into an agent of contagion.

When humanists complain that vulgarizers pre-empt the market, they must also admit that they have to blame their cumbersome styles, the dismal catalogues that they substitute for perceptions, and their insensitivity to the living concerns of the populace. They prove themselves as unheeding as are those of whose unheedingness they wail. They too affect an innocence, behind which they conceal their inability to assume responsibility in the world of mechanical stress. Yes, there are subjects everywhere within the "humanities" that cannot be popularized, in which no such effort should be attempted. But where is the line of separation? Only in the mind that can address with respect another mind.

It may be that every exertion toward a community of learning is bound for a long time, for the remainder of our existence, to come to no decisive conclusion. But for us, is success the only goal? Upon those who have the concern, and to match it the energy, rests the self-assumed burden of responsibility. Having accepted the hospitality of the obligation, we can not shake off the consequence. Yet, is it nothing but a burden? Is it only a dead weight we have sullenly to carry about the streets? Is it merely an ordeal to which we must submit? Not in the least. Like the precious, beautiful, insupportable and wholly irrational blessing of individuality, with all the myriad quandaries of responsibility therein involved, the responsibility for the human mind to preserve its own integrity amid the terrifying operations of the machine is both an exasperation and an ecstasy.

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The Early Lyric in Gaelic

PÁDRAIG Ó BROIN

I come of the Gaels:
My honor theirs.
Gaeldom my learning;
My glory hers.

SO, IMAGINED some anonymous medieval poet, did Colmcille speak, going into exile—a verse that if he did not make, he yet would have wholeheartedly endorsed. "I am a Gael" is from the beginning a note persistent in our literature. He who would appreciate Gaelic literature should have, to quote out of context from Helen Waddell's *The Wandering Scholars*, "no sense of perspective, but a strong sense of continuity."

Although the earliest surviving examples are only some thirteen hundred years old, our oldest Gaelic literature affords a glimpse into the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages, letting us see the living hand behind the artifacts that archaeologists uncover with spade and patient brush.

Gaelic culture has always known itself unique. Hence the proper subject of the professional Gaelic poet was Gaeldom and its people; by extension the other world, pagan or Christian; only by courtesy the rest of the world and of mankind. Poems of place, therefore, and poems praising king and chief loom large in the fabric of Gaelic verse:

I shall remember all my days
their names and their violent deaths.

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That quotation from Eochu ua Flainn, who lived in the tenth century, may be thought of as epitomizing the Celtic "court" poet's function: to act as posterity's instrument for preserving the memory of great men and of important events. For, quite literally, the professional poet had to take all knowledge as his province—all knowledge, that is, which was felt to be nationally essential: the names and deeds of great men, the natural and artificial features of the country, with the proper explanation of who and what and when had given each place its name and claim to remembrance. And the poets recognized their duties as well as their privileges. Cúan Ó Lothchain (died 1024) puts it:

> That poet proved—nor slight the task—
> Unable to answer aught is asked
> Has no right to forage a province
> Nor to become all Ireland's ollave.

A poet on *cuairt* (making a circuit of his patrons, proved or potential) must offer sample of his wares:

> Thus the man of true art:
> Whenever he makes a call,
> Entering, tunes his harp
> And promptly chants a stanza.

This role of "court" poet has behind it a long and illustrious history. Such professionals, *filid* (*fili*, singular), are part of the Gaelic world when it is first documented in the fifth century and are still part of that world when the Gaelic polity went down in apparent collapse during the half century after the battle of Kinsale (1601). The privileged position of the *filid* dates back literally to prehistory, for at the earliest mention of the Continental Celts by Greek writers the same institution is in being.

The poet by virtue of intellectual achievement alone was assured a place in society, maintenance and lavish payment for poems. Traditionally, Eochaidh of Connaught, a one-eyed king of the first century A.D., gouged out his one eye to satisfy the importunity of a satirist who also demanded—and got—the queens of Munster and Leinster for bedmates, and took back with him to Ulster a hundred and fifty Leinsterwomen of rank and seven hundred white cows with red ears. Not all poets could demand such

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fees, but the *Ancient Laws of Ireland* set out that an ollave-poet's *eneclann* (honor price), and the payment due him for his composition both were seven *cumals*, which equaled in value seventy full-grown cows. The *fili's* honor price was equal to that of a minor king or that of a bishop; and he enjoyed almost complete immunity of person as well as the right of giving sanctuary. Passages in the law tracts set out his function as judge, as panegyrist and as satirist whose verse, when it came to getting satisfaction from a neighboring kingdom, frequently had more effect than his ruler's spearmen.

One of the legal tracts expresses in verse what a poet is entitled to demand in the way of a house and furnishings:

> I demand a house well-thatched,
> Substantial, swept immaculate—
> No house for dogs or cattle
> But for honor and hospitality.
> I demand a high seat, padded
> Well with down, and blankets.

The profession tended to be hereditary—naturally, where ownership of mensal land was involved—and the same names crop up generation after generation. However, as new names also come into the picture there apparently was some way by which the guild's ranks could be recruited: Welsh law provided that, although poetry was a forbidden art to the son of a churl, did he succeed in learning it he automatically became a free man.

The earliest examples of Gaelic verse have somewhat irregular rhythm. There is no rhyme, but alliteration is a deliberate structural device. Here is a vivid piece of panegyric, a eulogy, probably sixth-century, of one Labraid Moen who took revenge on the murderer of his grandfather and father:

Dind Ríg	Dinn Righ,
rúad túaim tenbai,	Red fence of fire;
tricha fuirech	Thirty rulers
fo brón bebsait.	In agony died.
Brúisius, bréosus	He bruised them, burnt them,
bárnia lond Labraid,	Ireland's hero,
láth Elggae,	Loegaire's grandson,
aue Luirc Lóiguiri	Labraid the fierce . . . .

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The formal poems of the *filid* were spoken, or rather chanted, to a background of harp music, but with normal prose accentuation; although the words carrying out the elaborate scheme of alliteration, assonance, consonance and rhyme would for the most part naturally be those on which speech stress normally fell, these words yet bore no regular metrical ictus. If, as is most probable, early Gaelic lyric was also wedded to music, that music has only doubtfully survived and cannot now be identified with complete certainty. However Eugene O'Curry long ago pointed out that many an early Irish lyric exactly fits surviving airs of unknown antiquity. He instances one eleventh-century poem. A student making his way slowly on foot from the famous monastic school of Clonmacnoise on the Shannon, across the plain of Meath to the almost equally famous school at Swords, County Dublin, is overtaken by a rider who inquires:

"Whence, son of learning?"

"From bell-sweet Cluain turning
After my course I journey
  To study now at Swords—
But, you have news of Cluain?"

"I tell but what is bruited:
Cluain's cells uprooted
  Foxes on men's guts gorge."

As O'Curry says, this verse sings to the music of *Seán Ó Duibhir a' Ghleanna* and I have tried to make the translation run to the same haunting air.

In Ireland, at least before the sixth century, it would appear that the function of *fili* and *draoi* (druid) were little differentiated. Even after the rise of Christianity and the consequent loss of power and prestige by the druidic class, the *fili* was credited with magical and mantic powers, and this semimagical aspect of poetry has persisted in Gaeldom. To us today, however, the magic of Old Irish poetry lies in its lyricism, the poet manifesting himself as person and reaching across the centuries with the immediacy of realized experience to touch mind and heart a thousand years or more after his words were spoken.

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Much lyric has survived: some as marginalia in religious and secular codices, other because quoted as examples of form in the metrical tracts dating in final redaction from about 1060. These tracts are collections of poems and fragments of poems illustrating the technical requirements of various meters. Some examples may have been composed for the purpose; others are quotations from poems yet extant; still others are fragments of otherwise lost poems. Some are complete epigrams. Here is a ninth-century epigram on a grudging giver, written in "slap-on-the-buttocks *debide*" meter:

A Kick in the Arse

Wow!
Not horses he bestows for poems
but gives what suits his kind—I'm told,
A cow!

Here is a fragment, all that remains, of a ninth-century love song. A woman speaks of a lad, apparently younger than herself, to whom she has given love:

Heart's darling he;
Oak sapling he;
A stripling he—
A kiss from me!

Perhaps, after all, it is not a fragment but all there ever was to it. This one is also ninth-century:

The son of the king of Moy
Found in a green wood
A girl at midsummer.
She gave him black fruit from thorns;
Strawberries she bestowed—
An armful, on rushes.

It has been said that early Irish poetry is impersonal. Rather, what of it is true poetry is a highly personal thing—we merely do not know the men and women and circumstances behind the individual poem. Those who made these poems and spoke them and the men and women for whom they were made, in whose wood and wicker halls they were chanted, were our ancestors, blood and bone

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and brain; we are of them, and what out of all they made survives is worthy of attention—nor from pietas alone.

So far as the poems' worth is concerned, let me quote one poet's feeling in the matter:

Heaven's God forgot me not
  For soaring, marvellous verse:
He, unhesitating, put
  Sheen of red gold on my words.

A common phrase in Old Irish lyric and tale is *rop alaind*—"was beautiful," "was lovely." Always, as it ever must be, it is in the past tense; beauty fleeing the hand, the eye, the heart that, in Hopkins' words, would hold "beauty, beauty, beauty . . . from vanishing away." Although this, of course, to a great extent holds good for the lyric poetry of all time, of all mankind, to my thinking it applies with peculiar force to Gaelic lyric, particularly to the Old Irish period. Whether he apply himself to worship of the world, the flesh and the Devil, or to spreading tidings of God, ever the Gael is powered by a fanatical singleness of purpose unique among the peoples of earth. This intensity is recognizable as one hallmark of his literature.

Never in all poetry a woman fairer, more beautiful, than woman loved of the Gael. Never a chief braver, more generous. Never a saint more powerful, hero or martyr more selfless. Never an enemy more diabolical, more deserving of ruthless revenge. Even before the foreigner came we find poems such as this in the *Annals*—an elegy on the son of a king of Connacht, killed A.D. 645.

Raghallach, Uatach's son,
  Speared on the white steed's neck:
Muireann mourned him sore;
  Cathal well avenged.
Though Cathal lacks a father
  His father lacks no revenge:
Sixteen destructions committed;
  Slain, six and fifty men.
I, like many another,
  In avenging Raghallach shared:
Maelbride, Mothlachán's son—
  In my fist his grizzled beard.

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Lent lyric immediacy by the vividly realized image in the last line —the poet himself dangles the archenemy's head upside down from his hand—it becomes a purely personal utterance.

And never, in all man's millennial story, a land lovelier, more fruitful than the poets' Ireland—at once nation, goddess, maiden and mother. Even in poems attributed to a Catholic saint this love, this near worship of goddess-nation, maiden-motherland, breaks out. In the original the following twelfth-century poem, attributed to Colmcille on his going into exile, has in it all the heartbreak of the later millions whose agony of exile from an Ireland never again to be seen nothing could assuage, and only death itself could end:

Were Alba mine
  Shore to shore
House-room in Derry
  Far more.

Derry I love:
  Its fields, its light—
Hosts of angels
  Day and night:

No leaf in Derry
  Without a pair
Of lambent angels
  Hovering there.

No room on land:
  For nine waves out
Derry's angels
  Throng about.

From either side
  The Lough, lament
Conall, Eoghan,
  That I am sent.

Hearing, why
  Live on, apart:
Derry's grief
  Has cleft my heart.

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Leaving my own
  I bid them learn
No night but tears
  My lids will burn:

Since of the Gael
  I am bereft
Would but one night
  Of life were left.

I come of the Gaels:
  My honor theirs.
Gaeldom my learning;
  My glory hers.

Among strangers
  Heavy-hearted;
From Derry of Oaks
  I am parted. . . .

Derry astern.
  Great my woe:
Toward craggy Alba
  Swift I go.

The gulls of Lough Foyle
  Behind me, before,
Come not in my curragh,
  Wheel toward shore.

My curragh leaps—
  Not so my heart:
Body from soul
  When kin part.

Across the salt
  Stretch sight.
Tears well, remembering
  Ireland tonight.

A grey eye looking
  Never again
On Ireland, her folk,
  Women and men.

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I leave behind—
  Dearest words—
Durrow and Kells,
  Derry, Swords.

Drumcliff of my heart;
  That strand in the West;
Fair Lough Foyle
  Where swans rest—

Delightful all—
  And the gull-flecked ways,
Though I come from Derry
  Delight my gaze

Here there is the fleeting excitement of voyage and landfall.

Iona—see!
  Bless all who see;
Man going westward,
  My blessing with thee. . . .

Then he sees another boat heading toward home.

My heart is broken.
  Did life now fail
It is excess
  Of love for the Gael.

Dawn and dark,
  Grief that I go.
Ireland the only
  Name I know.

Did I own Alba
  Shore to shore
House-room in Derry
  More.

A combination of religious emotion and a feeling for nature that antedated and out-Francised him of Assisi are hallmarks of *Scéala Dúl* (poems bearing tidings of creation). One can imagine how such lyrics came to be and how it is that they survive as marginalia in codices enshrining more "important" grammatical or other didactic material. Writing materials were difficult to come by, prepared often by the scribe himself, and the poet's momentary in-

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spiration would be jotted down in the only space available—the margin of the book being read. Too, without good artificial light, much study and writing had to be done out of doors in daylight. Thus one day, writing outside his thatched wicker oratory, must some eighth-century or ninth-century poet-turned-monk have made "Barr Eidin" ("The Ivy Bower"):

My little hut in Tuaim Inver,
House that is not too full:
With its ordered stars,
Its sun, its moon.

Gobán built it there
And—may you know the truth!—
My darling God in heaven
Thatched the roof.

House where no rain falls,
No spear point threatens;
Bright as in a garden
And it unfenced.

Two things are particularly noticeable. The poem is a thing of the open air. It is a happy blending of Catholicity with a paganism that, unlike that of Greece or Rome, was so little alien to the Catholic Gael that the poet, almost certainly a cleric, saw nothing *outré* in naming Christ with Gobán, artificer to gods still unforgotten. Such lyrics reflect a feeling for nature that appeared on the Continent only, perhaps, with Fulbert of Chartres' tenth-century Latin poem on the nightingale, and in none of the non-Celtic vernaculars until a yet later date. Here is one from the eighth or ninth century, with the wind for theme:

It has broken, drowned, destroyed us.
King of the clean-starred skies
The wind has bruised us as brushwood
By a meteor pulverized.

And another:

Cold the night in Moanvore;
Savage the rain pours;
Howling over the wood's cover
The clean wind, laughing, roars.

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Here a wakeful monk, listening to the storm without, is grateful that tonight his monastery need not fear the "bright raiding Danes":

Bitter the wind tonight
  Shaking the waves' white manes:
Small fear fierce Lochlann warriors
  Can course the calm waves.

About the same time another Irishman on the Continent—although this time unfortunately in Latin rather than his native Gaelic, the poem being for a Continental audience—rejoiced almost savagely over the defeat of a Norse raiding force:

Who thirsted it for years
  Gulp blood of ravening raiders:
Sweet to slake the heart,
  Slaughtering Danes.

And this one from the ninth century:

Hungry winter is close on us:
  Only the wave laps, chuckling.
Frost disintegrates the leaves;
  Every plain a pool of puddles.

And this:

Rough gloomy Mount Cúa of wolves:
Wailing of wind through its coombs,
Barking of wolves the length of its woods.
The heron screams above its cliffs,
And wildly the dun stag's belling shrills
Throughout the autumn among its hills.

For centuries scholar and poet—the two then one—with immemorial discipline and tradition (how those words recur in any discussion of Gaelic poetry!) behind them wrote in Gaelic on subjects grave and gay. About 850 a student glanced up from the manuscript he was studying and saw his cat patiently watching a mousehole. "I and white Pangur," he scribbled on the margin. Then, realizing the underlying similarity between Pangur's persistent pursuit and his own:

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Myself and Pangur Bán,
  Each at his own art:
Learning lures my mind,
  Hunting holds his heart.

Better than fame I love
  To study the pregnant page;
Not envious Pangur Bán
  At play that suits his age.

We two alone in our house—
  Time drags not;
Endless adventure ours
  To keep minds taut. . . .

Against the silent wall
  Pangur's gleaming eye;
Against the wall of knowledge
  My feeble sight I try.

Eager lightning leap—
  Mouse beneath his paw;
I joy when a complex problem
  Yields its hidden law.

Though we are always so
  Neither either heeds—
Each with his own loved craft,
  Boasting joyous deeds.

Expert he at the work
  He does from dawn till night;
I at my own work stay,
  Bringing the dark to light.

Part of a living tradition, such verse is plenary poetry and not mere metrical exercise. Helen Waddell, dealing with the medieval Latinists, quotes the Old Irish triad—Three lasting things: grass and copper and yew. "Their Latin verse," she sums up, "is beaten copper: the Irish has the grass and the yew. It is the incommunicable gift."

Professional or amateur, the Gaelic poet moved in absolute

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freedom, yet ever in accord with stringent prosodical rule, matching passionate content with the most polished of formal verse so as to defy transmutation. Examples of tradition's influence that yet leaves the lyrical impulse unhampered, or even urges toward it, are frequent in the literature. Take this, from the twelfth-century *Colloquy of the Old Men:*

There came out onto the green Patrick and Caoilte and all that were in the fort, and it was not long for them till they saw a single warrior approaching. This is how that youth was, with a shirt of yellow silk against his body and a magnificent green cloak on him, and a golden brooch in his cloak on his breast.

"Who are you, fighting man?" said Caoilte.

"Hugh son of Hugh of the Feats . . . and I am the best of all the Tuatha Dé Danann, and to ask something of you I am now come."

The warrior inquires of Caoilte how the mound on which they stood came to be called the Cairn of Manannán, and Caoilte tells of the meeting and betrothals that gave the mound its name:

A hero of the Tuatha Dé, Aillén, fell in love with the wife of Manannán mac Lir, while Aillén's sister Áine loved Manannán. She in turn was dearer to Manannán than all the women of the world. One day Áine inquired of her brother, "What wastes that kingly form that once was yours?"

"By my word, girl," answered Aillén, "there's not a person alive I'd tell that to, save you alone. I've set my heart on Lovelybreast, daughter of Aengus the Fair and wife to Manannán."

"In my power to remedy that," said Áine, "for Manannán loves me, and if he gives his wife to you I'll sleep with him that you may get comfort."

They came . . . to this mound. Áine sat down beside Manannán on his right and gave him three loving, passionate kisses, and they held converse with one another only. When Manannán's wife looked on Aillén she loved him immediately, so that either had speech but for the other.

"Now that's a complicated story," Patrick interrupted. . . . Whence the proverb, A romance is a complicated affair. Then Manannán gave his own wife to Aillén, and he himself took Áine. She began making love to him, and made this song:

Come with me, Son of Lir
  Where Dairbre's oaktrees top all woods:
Cocks crow, the blackbird speaks,
  Savage hounds are bugling.

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Every harmony there for you,
  Known, unknown: cuckoo's call
Sudden from the dark woods;
  Stags bell, brawling.

Hearing the timid deer whistle,
  A woodpecker chisel the bole of a tree,
Warriors singing in a strong wind,
  Grouse of a frosty evening;

Listening to many musicians
  Making music for you there.
In our house girls are lovely—
  And yours, Son of Lir.

Aillén went with Manannán's wife to his father's court, and Manannán took Áine with him to the Land of Promise.

"And those, Hugh my soul," said Caoilte, "are the two questions you asked me."

Very obviously the twelfth-century writer of *The Colloquy* had in mind the many *echtraí* (adventures) in which an immortal wiles a mortal to *Tír Ildathach* by describing in crystalline verse the delights and pleasures of the Many-Coloured Land, delights that do not satiate, need fear no ending. Feeling, no doubt, that immortal wooing immortal could be no less punctilious, he breaks into verse, seeing nothing incongruous in listing human pleasures for these very human gods—and quite overlooking the fact that at the point his tale had reached there was no need for Áine to coax Manannán away with her.

The imagery of "Son of Lir" is almost exclusively aural. In other poems the writer's eye has garnered most of his material. Take "Hiraeth" ("Longing"), where Caoilte, remembering, sees as from a height the entire island of Arran spread before him, mountain and meadow and moss all equally in focus[1] as he recalls in age that "green-glenned island."

Arran of many deer:
  The sea lapping her shoulder:

[1] It might be noted that the early Gaelic poets were the first "Imagists"—the poems are built up by a succession of vignettes.

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Ridges where blue spears redden
  When island herds are broken.

Towers from the sea her peak:
  Lush pasture, scanty her marshes;
Hilly, oak-wooded, peopled,
  Green-glenned island of horses.

Hinds startle her hills;
  Bog-berries ripen her thickets;
Mast on her oaks in autumn,
  Water cold in her rivers.

Swift her greyhounds, her beagles;
  Blackberries, sloes on the blackthorn;
Bothies that hug her woods;
  In her oakwoods, quarrelsome stags.

Lichens purple her rocks,
  Grass in her glades abundant;
On mossy sheltering crags
  Spotted fawns are jumping.

Heavy her meadows, her swine;
  Joyful her fields—no lie;
Nuts atop her white hazels;
  Longships sailing by.

Pleasant when sunshine comes—
  Trout by her riverbanks,
White cliffs echoing seagulls:
  Delightful at all times Arran.

"Green-glenned island of horses." Young horses, I am sure, for such memories are of youth and all thus remembered must be young forever—young as the mind remains that so remembers. In Ireland, apparently, at least the articulate were vividly aware through every sense of the world around them; they still held in heart that youthfulness that only one no longer young, but born to luck, can know: that sense of spring not all a lifetime's autumns may banner to decay, so that remembered years—autumn, or summer, or winter's frigid self—are all one everlasting spring.

Personal poetry, the poetry of situation, is well exemplified in

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another poem from that same *Colloquy,* a lament attributed to Créide for her lover Cael, drowned while pursuing the warriors of the King of the World into the sea at the Battle of Ventry. Much attribution of Gaelic poems need not be taken any more seriously than the tale of that mythical battle itself; but be the poem the actual utterance of a bereaved girl, or the work of one who, exercising the poet's prerogative of empathy, put himself in her place and made the poem speak the thing a widowed heart would say, it can still take rank as personal poetry:

The bay resounds
  From the surging flood of Rinndavarc:
That he of the Lake of Two Hounds drowned
  Reason that wave berates the strand.

The heron screams
  From Drumdahrane across the fen:
She begrudges not her life
  And the fox upon her nest intent.

Mournful the cry
  The thrush is crying on Drumkeen:
Not more cheerful is the note
  The blackbird flutes in Letterlee.

Mournful the roar
  The stag roars in Drumalesh;
Dead the hind of Drum Shileann;
  The constant stag bells for her yet.

Death to me
  That he that lay with me is dead:
Son of her from Derrydadoss
  To be with boards above his head.

All ends for me
  That dead beside me Cael should be.
That tides should cover his bright side
  Maddens me, so powerful he.

Mournful the roar
  The sea wave makes against the beach,
That comely noble warrior drowned:
  Anguish to me Cael dared their reach.

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Mournful the boom
  The wave makes on the northern shore
Pounding against indifferent rocks,
  Keening Cael who comes no more.

Mournful the war
  Waves wage against the southern coast.
For myself, my days are done—
  Witness ravaged face alone.

Discordant drums
  The heavy wave of Tulcalesh:
Now no good is good, and I
  Broken by all it now laments.

MacCrifan drowned:
  None lives worth love, that warrior gone.
Many fighters fell by his hand,
  In danger's day his shield roared not.

In a twelfth-century cantefable, *The Madness of Sweeney,* the king, crazed from battle slaughter and a saint's curse, wanders mad in the woods. He comes to where his wife Eorann is living, in the house of another king's son. Sweeney speaks first:

Sweeney: How pleasant, noble Eorann,
  To drowse in your lover's bed:
Not so for me out here,
  Tormented long in my head.

Once, big-hearted Eorann—
  Lovely your saying, and light:
"Separated from Sweeney
  Life would not last the night."

Today it is suddenly clear
  Love for your first love is gone—
You warm on your couch of down,
  I out in the chilly dawn.

Eorann: Welcome, my crazy innocent,
  Of the world's men my choice;
Though easy my lying, this body
  Starved since I heard of your loss.

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Sweeney: You have chosen the son of a king
With whom to carouse without care;
Now he your choice of lovers
No place for old love there.

Eorann: Though the king's son bring me
To halls of carefree feasting
Better a hollow tree
And we there, sleeping;

Were Ireland's men and Scotland's
Mine for the choosing
Better on cress and water
To live lacking lust with you.

Sweeney: No way for a loved lady
Sweeney's harried life;
Cold my bed on Ard Oola—
Cold I lie most nights.

Meeter you love and cherish
Him with whom you habit,
Than a famished, haggard madman,
Naked, repulsive, savage.

Eorann: My grief, my nervous madman,
You to be tattered, distressed,
Bramble and blackthorn tearing
Your pale and wasted flesh.

Sweeney: Gentle compassionate girl,
It is not you I'm blaming:
Christ the Son of Mary
Decreed my taming.

Eorann: Would we were together
Though feathers grew through our sides,
Forever, come dawn, come dark,
With you, each day, each night. . . .

This, as every true poem must, reveals the minds of those who people it. Indeed, being a poem in very truth, it also discloses clearly the quality of the writer's own mind. Possibly Eorann was not faithful to her crazed husband; so far as the poem is concerned

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that is immaterial. The main thing is that the poem itself exists and, existing, shows that the concept, the ideal of true fidelity between man and woman, was intimately part of that man who made it.

Let me end with one short "poem of place":

Femen today is best of all:
  Desire of saints; unknowing decay;
  Many its hearthfires, many its folk;
Land that loves the cuckoo's call.

AUTHOR'S NOTE. *In giving examples—from only a few categories of poems—I have put all my own translations into verse of a sort. Where an attempt to coerce rhyme would interfere too grossly with carry-over of meaning, I am content with the quieter chime of assonance—that identity, or even close similarity, of the dominant vowels at the line ends—and occasionally with consonance. The old makers were men to whom the metrical shape and cunning inlay of sound were of as much importance as the poem's content; and even though it be acknowledgedly impossible to carry over matter and music and meaning together into another language, a translation in verse, however halting, is the least one may offer in homage to men whose art was their life—and, in the dark centuries, their country's life, inciting as it did to that will for "lewd libertie" the alien enemy found so uncivilized, so inconsiderate, so damnably inconvenient.*

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CONtroversy

If Deterrence Fails

MARK HEDDEN

Recent demonstrations of Russian missile superiority have inspired a number of "reappraisals" of this country's deterrence policy. One of the more striking of these is a book by Herman Kahn, called *On Thermonuclear War*. In a review in the *New York Times,* January 1, 1961, Jerome Spingarn describes the book as a "realistic" appraisal of the possibility of thermonuclear war, of the probable effects of such a war and of the chances for survivors afterward. If preparations are made, Kahn believes that many people would survive and that these would be able to adapt themselves to the rigors of environmental conditions that would be permanently changed (that is, for 10,000 years or more). Kahn calls for a tough-minded approach by national leaders to make deterrence credible by setting up a broader pattern of responses to potential enemy threats and by preparing a base for national continuity in the event of thermonuclear war.

While this writer is all in favor of more realism on the subject, he feels that, as oriented by his premises, Kahn's proposals come perilously close to initiating what he, himself, terms a "self-fulfilling prophecy" and that in his efforts to make a persuasive case for his ideas Kahn weights his data and achieves something more in the nature of propaganda than the objective report he claims.

Kahn states sensibly that "our almost complete reliance on deterrence working is probably an example of frivolity or wishful thinking." The policy of deterrence was, and still is, the national policy. In his State of the Union address President Kennedy said:

> If we are to keep the peace, we need an invulnerable missile force powerful enough to deter any aggressor from even threatening an attack that he would know could not destroy enough of our own forces to prevent his own destruction. For as I have said upon taking the oath of office: "Only when our own arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed."

Kahn points out: "Deterrence may fail despite our best efforts. Even seemingly adequate measures may fail. No matter how threatening our retaliatory force may be, war can occur." Precipitating causes could be accidental triggering of the alert force, miscalculation, irrational or pathological actions, escalation of a limited war, or unbalanced situations that might lead rulers of certain nations to believe war less dangerous than peace.

"We need an invulnerable missile force powerful enough to deter any aggressor from even threatening attack." What if the United States *were* threatened? The only wholly convincing deterrent weapons system, Spingarn notes, would have a set of controls designed to retaliate automatically in the event of attack. With anything less, the reasoning goes, an enemy might bank on the President's hesitancy to condemn millions to death.

Kahn's suggestions are more subtle. He dismisses automatic retaliation as dangerous and impractical and discusses, in turn, a vast range of possible defenses, effects and counterposes. He places heavy emphasis on the potentially unbalancing effect of inno-

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vation. To dramatize his point, he demonstrates by tables that we have already reached World War V (1961) figured in terms of technological revolutions and offers mobilization goals for getting through World War VIII. He is quite aware of the surrealistic nature of his work and arranges certain sets of figures in a form that would delight a Dada poet. At one point he suggests that if eighty per cent of our retaliatory force (SAC) were destroyed in an initial strike by enemy attack, that remaining should be sent on an all-out, although admittedly futile, counter-stroke. Then he says, "I think this contingency plan is reasonable partly [in order] that every effort be made to insure that the enemy could not possibly destroy 80 per cent or more of our force on his first strike."

Kahn proceeds by quantitative analysis. "It is necessary to be quantitative. For example, in describing the aftermath of a war it is not particularly illuminating to use words such as 'intolerable,' 'catastrophic,' 'total destruction,' 'annihilating retaliation,' and so on. These words might be reasonable if it were really true that in a modern war the *total* target system would be 'overkilled' by factors of five or ten. It would then be fruitless to calculate or describe the exact degree of overkill. But as we shall see, the facts do not lead in this direction. It is therefore important to get a 'feel' for what the levels of damage might really be under various circumstances." By discussing the damage in terms of per cent and upping the toleration levels for strontium 90, a plausible case for survival is made out. "But," Kahn continues, "there is no reason to believe this will be true unless both Russia and the United States investigate the problem more thoroughly than has been done so far, and then take the necessary preparations."

According to Spingarn, Kahn "thinks that it is his task so to educate the national leadership that the will factor (the will to use thermonuclear weapons) is not zero. By so doing, he believes that he serves the cause of peace, because a potential antagonist can measure our will factor, and only a credible deterrent can deter." While there may be some question as to how a potential antagonist goes about measuring our "will factor," Kahn is clearly concerned with making the idea of deterrence credible to this nation. He urges the immediate manufacture and distribution of quantities of radiation meters to insure that, in the event of attack, the survivors will not panic or fall into a kind of contagious apathy on the simple rumor of radiation poisoning. Like Teller he plays down the present uncertainty among scientists as to how drastic the effects from multiple thermonuclear explosions are likely to be. He compares the predictable rate of genetic defects and mutations from fall-out to the present death rate from highway accidents. He points out that the radiation dosage to the "average" survivor of hypothetical attacks should stay within the current maximum dosage permitted in industry, one that can hardly be considered "cataclysmic." In effect, he attempts to provide a concrete expression of the limited nature of catastrophe, to make the postwar environment "real."

How dependable is Kahn's confidence in a postwar continuity? How thorough was his research?

"The fission process produces about 200 separate isotopes." Mr. Kahn's exposition covers the effects of each of three radioactive isotopes (cesium 137, strontium 90 and carbon 14). He does not account for the other 197 isotopes and he writes, "we did not look at the interaction among the effects we did study."

"The war may have important and totally unsuspected ecological consequences. For example, radiation kills a much higher percentage of birds than insects. . . ." Except for this very general statement, Kahn makes no reference at all to such things as the pattern of contamination possible in the food chain whereby certain simpler organisms tend to concentrate radioactive substances such as strontium 90 and pass them on in more lethal form to all animals that subsist upon them. An example of this is the lichen on which the caribou of Alaska feed. Lichen

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obtains its mineral nutrition from dust carried by rain, snow and winds and thus is particularly susceptible to radioactive fall-out. The *New York Times* on June 4, 1961, reported that "although Alaska has a generally low level of radioactive fall-out—about a fifth of that found in the rest of the United States—the Alaskan caribou have about the same amount of strontium 90 in their bones as cattle raised in the Nevada atomic test zone. . . ." As a consequence, caribou being one of the principal items in the diet of the Alaskan Eskimo, "the few measurements that have been made on the bones of Alaskans show that their strontium 90 contents are generally higher than those found in people in the temperate zone." The food chain, of course, can be broken among more sophisticated peoples by limiting the diet to "fall-out cookies."

In summary, Kahn's presentation lulls his reader by taking each aspect of thermonuclear war in turn and showing that no *single* effect is likely to be catastrophic, provided, of course, adequate countermeasures are taken.

"We did not choose this world; we just live in it." This retort of Kahn's implies the larger rationale of his study. But do we live in Kahn's world? Kahn, however independent his mode of study, is supported by Federal funds and is, by this, restricted in his judgment and range of inquiry. He suggests at one point that the world might be spared a considerable residue of radioactivity if by predetermined means communications between contending nations could be maintained; but, he writes, study of this question seemed "contrary to public policy as set forth in recent legislation forbidding the use of federal funds for the study of 'surrender.'" A more serious distorting element appears in the assumptions of his study. While Kahn professes a keen awareness of the problem of preventing an arms race, he sees no safety short of far-reaching developments involving complex and constantly renewed weapons systems, mobilization plans and extensive civil defense construction. The key to the paradox lies in Kahn's premise that the enemy is "bright, knowledgeable and malevolent"; an enemy he defines as one who expertly exploits his resources, understands his opponent's weaknesses and intends at the first opportunity to deliver a knockout blow. Kahn's responses may be entirely appropriate to the threat of an enemy he *assumes* to exist or who may come into being, but he makes no pretense of demonstrating that an enemy of that degree of perspicacity and malevolence exists now. The grave danger in Kahn's assumptions is that they can provide the stimulus and environment where, as Spingarn suggests, "by a process of interaction our enemies tend to grow to be what we believe them to be."

This brings us to the most difficult point of all, a question that by his own admission Kahn could not consider. Given our present knowledge of the effects of multiple thermonuclear explosions, would it be justifiable to retaliate if deterrence failed? Kahn's efforts to persuade us that a recognizable postwar continuity is possible constitutes one answer, but he is not professionally free to consider any other course. His work, at best, is a treatise on the best way of meeting an inevitable catastrophe and of limiting the formula of massive retaliation. At this time it is hardly possible or wise to decide an issue that, with luck, we may never have to face, but, unless the question is clearly realized, the difficulties in charting a course between the extremes of surrender and retaliation may be so much the greater.

If we did not retaliate, or retaliated and lost, what might we expect?

We have had six thousand years of recorded history to instruct us on the short and long term effects of the invasion of one people by another. How long does it take before the invaders become so identified with the conquered that their interests are one and the same? One hundred years? Five hundred years?

Conquerors, of course, do not always permit the conquered to co-exist. There is always the "final solution" for the problem of governing subject peoples; however, genocide, although it has reached some partic-

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ularly cruel peaks of refinement whenever applied with the power of the modern state, has always been rooted in fanaticism and as such tends to be a passing aberration, particularly when the economic efficiency of the state threatens to become seriously impaired by it.

From one view the survival and coherence of a defeated people seems to depend to a degree on the similarity or compatibility of the economic systems involved. The North American Indians are one case in our direct experience. Wherever the native cultures could play, even briefly, a role in the economic structure of the white invaders, they were generally tolerated—so long as they did not interfere with expansion or, as in the case of the Creek Indians, adapt so successfully that they became competitive.

We have had fifteen years to study the effects of Russian Communist invasion on satellite nations such as Poland and Hungary, and the effects of internal take-overs such as in China.

The demoralization that "happens to every nation that falls under the yoke of tyranny and learns through it the meaning of injustice" is undeniable. In the words of ibn-Khaldun, fourteenth-century Arab historian, such an effect can be observed in any person who has "lost control of his own affairs and lacks authority to guarantee his own safety." Something of this nature appears to be the case in Poland, according to a recent report by Martha Gellhorn in the *Atlantic*. The atmosphere is described as full of "anxiety, disgust and depression." And this despite the intellectual freedoms implicit in the fact that "there is an enormous attentive audience for the best work that can be done in theater, in films, in music, in painting and in writing. . . ."

"There is always less money. . . . Prices go up and wages stay the same . . . or go down. Many people have no jobs. But there is no unemployment relief, because in a Communist state there can be no unemployment. And the labor exchanges do not find people work. . . ."

"Prohibition made the United States a nation of illegal drinkers; Communist economics forces the Poles to be finaglers, cheats, little and big crooks." Recently there have been no political trials. "Now the state . . . snoops after signs of well-being, for legally there should be none."

In China conditions have been harsher and reports far more grim. Setbacks in the drive to harness China's vast labor pool by applying urban factory methods to agriculture have been well-publicized in the West; but the resistance and bad planning that is implied in these setbacks does not necessarily indicate any hope for leniency before the economic squeeze inherent in Chinese food supply problems is lessened.

In his book, *Decision in Germany,* General Lucius Clay pointed out one of the basic differences between Communist and democratic processes:

> In November 1946 General Robertson brought before the Co-ordinating Committee the matter of the organized movement of skilled workers from Berlin to Russia. The Soviet representative claimed that these workers were being given contracts but refused to give us information as to their right to turn down the contracts or to the numbers involved. Our stand in protest did develop an intense reaction in Germany which stopped for the time being any further deportations from Berlin. Our concepts of individual freedoms were never more clearly in contrast. I am sure that General Kurochkin was sincere when he explained that these workers were being given contracts and that they would be moved by special train with their belongings to the Soviet Union just as Soviet workers were moved on government orders. The forced acceptance of the contract and the forced movement had no special significance to him. The workers were needed by the state.

In the United States, democratic processes may not be so free or representative of the will of the people, nor security so assured by law as we like to think, but each political and economic right represents part of a tradition that was earned and fought for and must be constantly renewed. Our own failure, if only on idealistic grounds, to provide the elements of this tradition for the native peoples we have conquered suggests the treatment we might well expect in the event of a similar disaster to ourselves.

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It also indicates the nature of the road back should we ever lose these freedoms. Yet how do we value these rights against the conditions of a radioactive environment? Set against the effective lives of malignant radioactive isotopes (ranging from minutes to 10,000 years) how much longer than one lifetime do the worst effects of any dictatorship, even one so psychotic as that of Adolf Hitler's, last?

The deterrence policy seems to be based, in part, on a belief that had England and France had an adequate military force and an aggressive leadership in 1938 the crisis would have been resolved more favorably, possibly even to the extent of avoiding war. This seems to be the implication of Kennedy's statement: "Only when our own arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain . . . that they will never be employed." Can nations operating by democratic processes convincingly apply the principle of deterrence against a wily opponent of the genius of, say, Hitler? Possibly, Kahn thinks, if we compensate for inherent weaknesses in the democratic process by preparing emergency measures for the most extreme threat now, even to the point of reorganizing certain parts of our government to increase reaction speed. It is difficult to believe that the enormous investment in plant, weapons systems, civil defense measures and staff organization required will not bring us, sooner or later, into the kind of rigidity that characterized the situation in Europe in the years before 1914—the breakdown that Kahn brilliantly summarizes.

Some attention to the small things that can be done may prove more useful than continued bludgeoning of the larger issues. The present legislative restriction on the study of "surrender" with Federal funds is not likely to be removed. Private foundations that might support such activities would leave themselves open to charges of undermining American "will" and, not inconceivably, would be prosecuted. However, the inauguration of a large-scale study of means of "surrender" by an international agency (preferably the United Nations or, that failing, by a foundation based in a "neutral" country) might help to establish ways of limiting the degree of nuclear damage should a series of bluffs slide into war. Present study programs on arms control seems to end on the borders of conflict. Up to this time, any steps beyond that point have appeared as morbid ramblings. If the thinking of Kahn, among others, is at all accurate, a means of quickly ending a war, of holding off the point of total commitment to a struggle must be established. As Kahn points out, World War I might have ended in 1915 with the failure of the initial offensive plans. The crucial point in thermonuclear conflict would occur within a matter of hours. We cannot predict how those in command might act but we should, at least, make an effort to ensure that they have the means of putting an end to the conflict.

Many of the acts of modern nations would seem, as C. Wright Mills puts it, more "the summary and unintended result of innumerable decisions by innumerable men," than the consequence of knowledgeable decision. Against this kind of fate individual resistance appears futile, if not dangerous. Yet we cannot accept an either/or proposition as representing a valid description of the present state of affairs and a basis for action without tending to make inevitable the situation and its implicit choices. Kahn has performed a service in bringing home the fact that war can occur and that survival is not necessarily precluded, but his procedures would seem to increase the likelihood of war. The question before us is whether we may not be "accommodating," by accepting Kahn's plausible arguments, to a reality as bad, if not worse, than any other that can be conceived.

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Arms, Policies and Games

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ

During the last several years a great deal has happened both in the strategy and tactics of war-making, and in the technological potential for human destruction. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that many advances have been registered by strategists of peace during this same period. Indeed, the disparity between military strategy for conflict and civilian strategy for consensus seems constantly to be widening. The former becomes more precise, and the latter more strident.

Considering the statistics that continually press upon us this is readily understandable. Thermonuclear weapons that are one hundred times as devastating as those that laid ruin to Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been developed and made operational. Even cautious statisticians indicate that anywhere from one-third to one-half the populations of the United States and the Soviet Union would be annihilated in any multistrike hydrogen bomb exchange. We can only guess at the terrors of somatic and genetic dislocations that would follow in the wake of a thermonuclear explosion. These are but a few of the consequences predicted for a post-World War Three epoch.

Such information tends to blunt rather than stimulate interest in the problem of disarmament. The typical psychic reaction of a cancer patient doomed to die within a stipulated period of time is known as privatization; it takes the form either of retreat from worldly concerns or of accelerated ego gratification. The same is true of social deviancy in general. What we are witnessing is a form of privatization in which society knows the facts, yet feels impotent in the face of them. What must therefore be avoided is any tendentious repetition of the horrible but well-known facts; what must be emphasized is that no social analysis thus far made has demonstrated that society is in the position of a cancer patient. We have every right to assume the possibility between men and nations of a durable and valid peace.

The topic of disarmament is obviously long and broad. To discuss it in general terms would be a disservice, leading at best to soothing abstractions and sentimental aphorisms. Neither will get us out of this protracted period of privatization we are in. I shall therefore confine myself to a discussion of recent trends in arms control, and argue the thesis that arms control is not a substitute for a general disarmament policy, but its very opposite, and, further, that the very substitution of one for the other in the name of *realpolitik* is another aspect of the privatization process, subverting rather than supporting the search for peaceful alternatives to thermonuclear decimation.

Before offering my analysis I think it only fair to present the rationale and conclusions of the new civilian military analysts of RAND, ITEK, IBM and the various Centers of International Relations. Clearly, this agonizing reappraisal has significant policy-making ramifications. It had, in part at least, its origins in the correct assumption that the new role of the Soviet Union as a thermonuclear power of at least equal strength to ourselves required a re-evaluation of the strategy and tactics of war-making no less than in the goals and conse-

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quences of foreign policy. It was in the despairing aftermath of the Sputnik launchings that most of this new thinking about our arms control was undertaken. Academic strategists in the United States, who until the Soviet thrusts into outer space were tolerated as purveyors of mathematical paradoxes, came to be respected adjutants in policy decisions. At present, the strategists of deterrence have so influenced military and political thinking on United States arms policy, that discussions that do not take this shift into account belong to whatever political-military counterpart there is to the neolithic age.

In tabular form, the recommendations of the new civilian militarists (which I shall throughout abbreviate as NCM) are as follows:

a. The policy of disarmament should be made contingent upon the aims of national policy and national security. All stages in arms control therefore should be tactical representations of national self-interests. Thus disarmament, whether it be feasible or not, is not a central principle of foreign policy, but rather a possible stratagem in deterring aggression.

b. The United States and the Soviet Union are in a delicate balance of terror, which reduces itself to a bipolar arms race. Other participant-players in the thermonuclear game tend to form partnerships with one of the sides of the pole. As of now, these "Nth players" contribute to rather than detract from the symmetry of the terror balance only because two nations hold the overwhelming majority of the blue chips—in this case thermonuclear warheads. But this terror balance is an unstable equilibrium, threatening to become more delicate and less balanced with the passage of time, for the technological reason that initial strikes and retaliations are programed to occur in minutes and even seconds of each other, opening the possibility of mistakes in calculation. There is also the geopolitical reason of the maturation of an Nth player who has independent interests.

c. In the thermonuclear age an advantage accrues to the aggressor. This follows from the enormous expansion in the total destructive power of modern hydrogen weapons. According to the game theory principles of von Neumann and Morgenstern, a player can secure a gain of predictable dimensions irrespective of what the other player does or is planning to do. This situation only increases the rate and tempo of thermonuclear arms build-up and places an enormous premium on cheating, bluffing and *blitzkrieg* tactics.

d. In view of this situation, approaches to disarmament cannot lead to a serious resolution of outstanding world problems, since maintenance of the delicate balance of terror rests on assuming a relative equality of strength of the conflicting powers, an equilibrium that cannot be shown to obtain at any given moment. Thus arms control, defined as the maintenance of symmetry between conflicting players, is the only fruitful line of political discourse.

e. Popular thinking, including that of most military strategists, rests on a false premise, namely, that present-day weapons if used would destroy mankind. While Herman Kahn, in particular, maintains that doomsday weapons can be programed in the near future, the likelihood that this will come about is slim, given the tactical absurdity of programing self-annihilation as a means of victory. It is true that anywhere from ten to one hundred million people might perish in a hydrogen blast, but this is not total disaster. Man and his cultural institutions would probably survive even a multistrike thermonuclear war.

f. Given this set of conditions, bipolar discussions ought to turn on the following hinges: how rapid a thermonuclear retaliation should be programed, under what conditions ought we to make the first strike, how rapid would be the recovery rate from such a war, and what are the prospects for the re-establishment of social and political hegemony after a nuclear conflict? All of these questions are predicated on the assumption that a thermonuclear war, while it would represent an *unprecedented* catastrophe, would by no means be an *unlimited* catastrophe.

g. We ought to prepare now for the eventuality of a thermonuclear war, rather

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than to assume its impossibility. This preparation, in addition to its clear-cut psychological advantages, allows for the development of instruments for measuring the extent of somatic damage, of area evacuation programs and of experiments in evolving chemical and biological counteragents to nuclear damage. An advantage in terms of federal policy is also involved, since victory in thermonuclear war might well be determined by that population able to recover quickest.

h. Finally, the problems for the period following a thermonuclear conflict are the forms of survival and reconstruction, problems that do not exist in a pacifist stance that assumes that all forms of human life would perish. Advanced planning would include exploration of the kinds of conditional surrender thermonuclear power makes possible, and the kinds of checks needed to prevent violation of agreements arising from a negotiated settlement.

These policy recommendations and observations of the new civilian militarists have created a stir in government political circles, military agencies, civilian defense organizations and academic institutions. Even a casual sampling of the reviews of this new literature on arms control reveals the sharpest cleavage of opinion. The comments by the historian H. Stuart Hughes and by the mathematician James R. Newman, both committed to a disarmament approach, reveal the extent of these differences. In describing the new work of Herman Kahn, the most extreme advocate of game theory among the NCM, Hughes uses such phrases as "one of the great works of our time," "the master military strategist of the mid-20th century." He says, "what Kahn tries to do is to look thermonuclear war in the eye and to treat it as a reality rather than a bad dream.... The new strategists of deterrence offer one of the best reservoirs of brains in the country." Newman, for his part, doubts the very reality of the author of *On Thermonuclear War,* much less the seriousness of the work done. "Is there really a Herman Kahn? It is hard to believe. Doubts cross one's mind almost from the first page of this deplorable book: no one could write like this; no one could think like this. Perhaps the whole thing is a staff hoax in bad taste.... This is a moral tract on mass murder: how to plan it, how to commit it, how to get away with it, how to justify it. . . . This evil and tenebrous book, with its loose-lipped pieties and its hayfoot-strawfoot logic, is permeated with a bloodthirsty irrationality...."

At the risk of jumping in where angels fear to tread, I shall argue that Hughes makes too generous an estimate of the scientific worth of the war game theories, while Newman undervalues the work of the NCM in setting forth the actual climate of polity in which discussions on the arms question are taking place. We can afford neither the luxury of poor science nor cries of outrage at efforts to define the military and civilian realities of the present world. The fact that so expert an authority on nuclear weapons as Jerome Weisner can act as sponsor to the NCM and yet persuasively argue the case for world peace should make it plain that it is not the morality of Kahn, Wohlstetter, Kissinger, Schelling and Brodie that needs scrutinizing, but the scientific adequacy of their claims. It will be my purpose to explore both the paradoxes within the literature on deterrence and the rival solutions to the problems posed.

In order to carry out this purpose, I shall frame my remarks as a series of logical paradoxes in which the NCM seem inextricably involved. Perhaps a more coherent and compelling set of reasons for a policy of disarmament can be offered than has thus far been the case.

1. The NCM insist that their efforts at describing the conditions for a successful arms control program are realistic and highly utilitarian from a policy-making perspective; yet, since all psychological variables of an asymmetrical type (which includes nearly all factors) are not accounted for, this claim is seriously suspect. The actual social and political problems of moment belong to a historical period designated "post-World War Two," but the striking characteristic of the NCM is that they carry

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on analysis in an "as/if" universe of "post-World War Three." This is an *Alice in Wonderland* methodology that fails to tabulate the existential factors that must be considered for an accurate set of forecasts. The purpose of scientific statements is the presentation of explanations allowing us to make accurate forecasts. This purpose is not satisfied by assuming a universe of two players displaying symmetry in everything from weapons to morals. Such essential variables as the function of the United Nations as a mediating force in military and jurisdictional disputes, and the role of "third force" nations such as England and France (which do have atomic weapons) and India and China (which are likely to have such weapons in the near future) are discussed, notably by RAND experts, as if the nations necessarily must be partners in a "simple game" at a Monte Carlo casino and not independent variables possessing unique interests and ambitions.

Even if we consider the social universe as militarily symmetrical, there is the matter of rifts within each side. These may take the form of a schism over policy questions as such. For example, should the United States intervene directly in the civil strife taking place in Laos, Congo or Cuba? If so, what are the ground rules of such intervention? What are to be the relations between legal sovereignty and political objectives? The rules of a game of chance are after all enshrined in custom and tradition. In addition, such games are programed for a conditional victory permitting the further playing of games. The same cannot be said of international political relations. Here rules, when present at all, are vague and subject to constant (and arbitrary) reinterpretation. Further, the purpose of warfare between nations is unconditional victory—at least in the military sphere. To commence a war on any other basis would be sheer casuistry. The NCM are too ready to disguise an elitist manipulation of human beings behind a theory of games, without seriously coming to grips with political behavior.

2. The NCM reveal an extraordinary linguistic ambiguity. Often they talk of disarmament problems when in fact they mean arms control; just as frequently they talk of arms control when they simply mean the policy of deterrence through arms expansion. If this were purely a semantic difficulty one could assume that it would be corrected in the course of further explorations. But the difficulty really seems to be in game theory proposals as such. The concept of deterrence, for example, is sometimes employed as the strategy of the first strike, and other times as the strategy of retaliation to a first strike. In the work of Kahn and Schelling the notion of deterrence enters the analysis only in terms of a response to a strike, whereas in the work of Kissinger and Wohlstetter, deterrence means the maximization of balance factors over terror factors. The NCM critique of the "Maginot-mindedness" of Pentagon officials, who note that "if these buttons are ever pressed they have failed in their purpose," is in fact a criticism of the deterrence policy in the ordinary meaning, that is, the prevention of a military attack.

The NCM have redefined deterrence to mean willingness to fight. Thus the issue game theory raises is not deterrence as such, but the retaliatory capacity of both players in the game of war. The theory of the first strike rests on the belief that large-scale advantages accrue to that nation-player that first uses thermonuclear weapons. The NCM thus recommend (a) that we not rule out the possibility that our side will be the first to strike, since this would further upset the delicate balance of terror, and (b) that we program our thermonuclear effort in terms of split-second retaliation to any strike, the size of the retaliation to be determined by the extent of the original strike as well as the military and political objectives sought. Here the dilemma hinges on an interpretation of the concept of deterrence as aggression, prevention of aggression, or retaliation to aggression. Until the logical status of this concept is made plain, war game theory will obfuscate and disguise policy considerations, and, worse, contribute to the heightening of tensions by casting serious doubt on the worth of disarmament negotiations.

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3. Classic definitions of warfare imply that there will be a victor and a vanquished. The NCM, however, have redefined warfare so that any specific gains from thermonuclear conflict seem to be liquidated. They envision the "phasing in" of a brief war, after which both sides would suspend hostilities, at least temporarily, and arrive at some operational settlement. War is defined as a minimum-maximum affair; that is, it is defined in terms of the number of people who can be sacrificed in a thermonuclear holocaust without disrupting the possibility of playing out the game at a later stage. As in a game of chess between associates, the enjoyment of convivial rivalry takes precedence over who wins any particular contest. Here the best analogy would be a medieval joust in which the contestants say to one another: "That was a fine game. We ought to meet again next year and perhaps the outcome will be different." But this can be done only if the rules of the thermonuclear game are strictly enforced: the players must not program "Doomsday machines" (to use Kahn's pithy phrase), and mankind must be willing to consider itself as a pawn or sacrificial lamb.

Ignoring the pathological aspects in this approach, we might mention a series of possibilities that somehow have escaped the notice of most war game theorists. The measure of the number of acceptable dead in terms of economic recovery rates, while seemingly objective, is by no means the sole measurement possible. Economic recovery as a measurement might prove empty either to the employee or employer who suffers radiation injuries or whose family is decimated as a result of an atomic blast. This brings us to two points of even greater substance: if we are not to assume the rationality of men in settling affairs outside the spectrum of terror, why should we presume that doomsday machines would never be programed; conversely, if we assume the sufficiency of reason in men, at least to stop short of doing violence to self-interest, why can we not assume that staged disarmament could take place prior to any thermonuclear strike? If men can still distinguish between warfare and annihilation, military objectives and civilian objectives, the function of a terror balance to maintain peace seems obviated. If, on the other hand, interests are the only motor force, even then the only alternative to annihilation is disarmament. In either case, the canard of arms control seems an unstable halfway house between war and peace.

4. The NCM derives its working model from a utilitarian view of human behavior, from a calculation of self-interests along Benthamite lines, yet game theory permits a definition of common interest only in the context of an explicit contractual arrangement, a coalition. It fails to prescribe for those situations in which a coalition is not effected, such as secret and unilateral renewal of tests, that is, for the entire problem of bluffing and cheating previously alluded to. Thus, as Anatol Rapoport has noted in the *Nation,* from the *strategic point of view* any firm decision not to renew thermonuclear weapons testing is irrational, a violation of self-interests; yet from a *policy-making point of view,* such a decision is absolutely necessary. What this indicates is the need for a continual empirical appraisal of the relation of interests to objective needs. If we define interests and reason as equivalent, we are led to conclude that any lessening of the arms conflict is injurious either to one or the other player. On the other hand, if we define interests apart from reason, that is, if we set up the latter as something that can modify and adjudicate the claims of the former, we are out of the realm of game theory as such and into social science. The aims of retaliatory equilibrium clearly are not the same as those of rational equilibrium. A retaliatory equilibrium must strive to simplify the terms of the game, must establish strategic notions of friend and foe, which a political equilibrium would seek to distinguish. The retaliatory equilibrium is thus as simplistic a model for conducting foreign policy as various sentimental forms of unilateralist doctrine. It projects symmetrical models onto an asymmetrical political climate, and rules-of-the-game comprehension into a context of social disorganization and political disequilibrium. What the NCM have done

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is substitute stereotypy for typification. And what this substitution disguises is the essentially divergent, if not conflicting, aims of strategic decisions and policy decisions.

5. The NCM develop a theory of strategies supposedly based on a consideration of mutual strengths and weaknesses of the players, yet for their theory to be operative they must assume the morality of the players involved. The problem of cheating is not simply an irritant to military activities, but heavily clouds the worth of war game theory. For, while mathematical probability necessarily assumes that all players are fully aware of and abide by the rules, military game theorists often talk as if our foreign policy must be based exclusively on the military capacity of the Soviet Union, while encouraging the Soviets to base their policy on the morality of the United States. Kahn, for his part, makes much of the sentimentality of United States military intelligence that tacitly or otherwise assumes that the Soviets have no immediate war aims. Wohlstetter and Kissinger, for their part, have made it equally plain that the moral inhibitions of Americans and their policy makers are the chief reason that a thermonuclear war has not been triggered thus far. Now, game theory either must assume that we ought to have started hostilities, if technological and military considerations hold exclusive sway, or it must accept the consequences of a morally valid perspective in policy making and decision taking. Problems of attainability cannot be segregated from problems of desirability—yet this seems to be just what game theory must do to be operative. Strategic thinking, even if impartially considering the interests of both sides, nevertheless is limited intrinsically to considering the interests of one side at a time, and so unavoidably it leads to a conclusion that from a strictly military position may be mutually disadvantageous. For the United States to base its policy considerations on Soviet war-making potential, and for the Soviets to base their policies on United States moral fiber is neither good military science nor common sense. Nor does Schelling's view of establishing mutually agreed upon rules of behavior solve the dilemma, since the very consensus intended transcends the realm of self-interest in which war games are played.

6. While the NCM maintain an aura of detachment about the larger social issues, it is quite plain that the forecasts they make are predicated on pessimistic and even fatalistic premises. Their efforts suffer from the danger of self-fulfilling prophecy. As Merton, and before him Thomas, indicated: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." Further, it has been pointed out that the translation of fears into reality operates only in the absence of institutionalized controls. One of the major claims of the NCM is that open consideration of post-World War Three conditions perhaps will alert the public to the dangers of such a war. But since every effort of the NCM is based on the possibility, if not the inevitability, of another war, thoughts turn to postwar survival, while deterrence assumes the role of combat readiness, if not actual combat. Given an absence of institutionalized efforts at peace-making, the prophesies of the NCM may be realized not because they are based on scientifically accurate predictions, but simply as a consequence of the general acceptance of the definitions provided by game theorists. The work of Edward Teller and Albert L. Latter well exemplifies this pessimistic propheticism. In *Our Nuclear Future: Facts, Dangers, and Opportunities,* their popularization minimizing the threat to life and limb from atomic fallout, they offer the consolation of metaphysics in place of science: "That will happen which will happen and what is to be we know not. God alone knows." They are committed to a thoroughly unscientific theory of predeterminism. They surrender *a priori* the possibility of working out alternative models of peaceful relationships, and instead seek refuge in the unwieldy designs of Providence. Unfortunately, the designs of Providence more often than not have turned out to be apologetics for the caprices of unscrupulous men.

7. Although the claim is made by and for the NCM that they are neutral with respect to the values of war and peace, they

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have made it unmistakably clear that they do place a premium on a warrior ethos, if not on war as such. One of the main arguments adduced by a number of game theorists, especially Morgenstern and Teller, is that preparation for war is necessary to justify the human quest for knowledge. An even greater distortion of the history of science is adduced to support this thesis, that is, that society does not accept the desire for knowledge unless it is somehow tied to war. Scientific discovery may or may not be used for warfare; it is a totally independent variable. To attach a premium to world conflict because it stimulates scientific invention is as faulty a notion as the pacifist belief that a slowdown in technology would increase the chances for world peace. These are false options. In fact, the abstract theory of games is a branch of pure mathematics that preceded current war game theories. Probability theory as such has no dependence for its existence on warfare, and it is wholly irrelevant for matters of political decision making. The use of a theory ought not to be confounded with its origins.

8. The NCM envision a short, brief war with several strikes, and have nothing of consequence to say about military operations beyond this thermonuclear phase. This is in flat contradiction to the Soviet theory of the protracted war. Game theorists cannot offer accurate forecasts since they have falsified the terms under which the combatant-players would wage the war. Furthermore, it is clear that a number of the NCM would fight a war without any solid probabilities of gaining a decisive victory. It often seems that war as a game replaces game theory, since the programing for hostilities is supposed to allow for the continuation of hostilities at some future, undetermined point. Contrasting Soviet military policy, as summarized by Raymond Garthoff and H. S. Dinerstein, with our own reveals several important differences. For the Soviets, survival is not an issue in war; for the NCM, it is often the only issue. For the Soviets, military action is subordinate to and answerable to overall political aims; in United States policy making, military action creates its own aims. For the Soviets, in the thermonuclear era as before, the primary objective of military operations is the destruction of hostile military forces and not the annihilation of the economic or population resources of the enemy; for the NCM, there is no clear distinction between war and annihilation and thus no distinction between military and civilian objectives. In Soviet policy, a long war is to follow thermonuclear exchanges, with conventional methods of destruction following up nuclear strikes; NCM policy seems geared either to an unconditional surrender or to a conditional surrender based on a restoration of the *status quo ante.*

It is evident that the commonly understood rules of the game that the NCM presupposes do not obtain in the present situation. Game theory, far from lessening the threat of nuclear warfare, creates the seeds for the most dangerous sort of miscalculations about the options, directives and goals of the other player. It is precisely the absence of rules commonly adhered to that has frustrated current disarmament negotiations. And again it must be noted that if such ground rules were to be established, the very *raison d'être* of the NCM would be largely obviated.

That the NCM have gained such a wide hearing is, in my opinion, more a consequence of the general breakdown in the disarmament dialogue between the great powers, than of any intrinsic merit in game theory proposals. In different ways, but with convergence at the functional level, the United States and the Soviet Union are witnessing what C. Wright Mills correctly describes as the rise of the cheerful robot and the technological idiot. If war game theory has done nothing else, it has alerted us to the dangers of mathematical techniques uninformed by the logic of the social sciences, to rationality isolated from reason. This dualism of rationality and reason, so clearly embodied in the NCM, has several and diverse roots, perhaps the most important of which is the absolute separation of "is" questions from "ought" problems. What began as science's proud declaration of independence from any political or theo-

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logical edicts has, through the mechanism of *expertise,* spilled over into the much larger assumption that indifference to valuational issues, if not stupidity in the face of them, is the best possible pose for the true scientific mind. The NCM tend to adopt a physician's attitude toward his work: they provide policy makers with carefully sifted information, comparative analyses of data, and the likely consequences of taking or not taking the line of action indicated; what the policy makers do with such information becomes their own business.

There is surely a moral undercurrent in a method that sees the game theorist as diagnostician and society as a patient. This method has the appearance of satisfying the historic identification of science with social welfare, while preserving an emotional identification with the neutral and objective image culled from experimental physics. The task of this paper is not to explain the pathology of the NCM; to do this would require a detailed examination of their recruitment policies and practices, their educational orientations, their prestige and status strivings, and the professionalization of the area. I would like, however, to call attention to Harold Laski's thoughtful criticism of *expertise* made many years ago. The relevance of his remarks is, I believe, self-evident.

> It is one thing to urge the need for expert consultation at every stage in making policy; it is another thing, and a very different thing, to insist that the expert's judgment must be final. For special knowledge and the highly trained mind produce their own limitations which, in the realm of statesmanship, are of decisive importance. *Expertise,* it may be argued, sacrifices the insight of common sense to intensity of experience. It breeds an inability to accept new views from the very depth of its preoccupation with its own conclusions. It too often fails to see round its subject. It sees its results out of perspective by making them the centre of relevance to which all other results must be related. Too often, also, it lacks humility; and this breeds in its possessors a failure in proportion which makes them fail to see the obvious which is before their very noses. It has, also, a certain caste spirit about it, so that experts tend to neglect all evidence which does not come from those who belong to their own ranks. Above all, perhaps, and this most urgently where human problems are concerned, the expert fails to see that every judgment he makes not purely factual in nature brings with it a scheme of values which has no special validity about it. He tends to confuse the importance of his facts with the importance of what he proposes to do about them.

That the overwhelming majority of men *are* capable of seeing beyond the immediate gratification of desires into the wider consequences of a course of action is indicative of the uses of reason in relation to problems of war. Certainly, the change in scientific and industrial conditions, and the creation of powerful weapons of annihilation have served to minimize the self-interest argument for war that is at the center of NCM proposals. It remains necessary only to define the quality of reason that we have spoken of as being absent in the approach of the game theorists.

What is required, and what, in part at least, has been reached through agencies such as the United Nations, is agreement on a minimum set of beliefs about man, the world and social values. Such norms insist on the necessity of maintaining life, although leaving open the question of what to do with it; the necessity of securing the material needs of men, although differing about what social structure at what given time can best meet those needs. There is also a need to allow people to shift, choose and alter their conceptions of what constitutes progress or prosperity, even though entrenched political and economic interests may not welcome such shifts and revisions. The unity required to evolve a working set of principles for securing peace is methodological rather than systematic. It requires us to approach past ideas concerning peace as hypotheses whose truth must be measured by the degree with which they can be correlated to objective strategies and goals. The method of science does not exclude decisive choices in moments of crisis, but it does caution us against ignoring alternative views simply on the basis of their unpopularity. It is this type of methodological common ground that defines the character of

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scientific rationalism, and not any dogmatic statements about the ultimate constituency of life.

Human reason is a handmaiden to the actual processes taking place in society and nature. When it becomes more, when it tries to spin a web of pure thought designed to overcome by games and game analogies the actual conflict of interests that exists, it delegates unto itself responsibilities it cannot by its auxiliary nature fulfill. But when reason becomes less than an intelligent, persuasive means of overcoming the paradoxes in society, when it becomes a semantical excursion, it runs the risk of surrendering men to a swamp of pessimism and cynicism. It is my contention that the NCM oscillate between arrogance in the face of social analysis and abrogation of the historic identification of the sciences with the deepest causes of human survival and growth. Thus, to move beyond the paradoxical findings of the new civilian militarists is to move beyond the never-never-land of war game theory into a clearer and cleaner use of social and political science.

ARMS, POLICIES AND GAMES

A Bibliography

This bibliography was prepared with two chief considerations in mind: first, to indicate the range of materials used in the preparation of my study; second, to provide the reader with a listing of the more significant literature that has been written on the subject during the past decade. I have divided this bibliography into four sections: arms control, disarmament, social issues on the question of war and peace, and scientific issues on the question of war and peace. This division does not imply a hard and fast division in the works cited. It is merely intended as an operational guide to the various types of literature extant. In general, I have restricted this bibliography to full-scale works, except where the periodical literature bears directly on the topics treated in my paper.

Those wishing to pursue the literature more carefully would do well to go through the files of such journals as *World Politics, International Conciliation* and *Foreign Affairs.* In addition, the reader's attention is drawn to several journals that have come into existence as a direct consequence of the thermonuclear epoch. I have in mind particularly such publications as the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* the *Journal of Conflict Resolution, Survival: The Institute for Strategic Studies* and *Current Thought on Peace and War.*

I should further like to call to the attention of the reader the fact that the various RAND Corporation studies herein cited are not for public sale, and are to be found only at a selective number of manuscript deposit libraries. The RAND Corporation issues an *Index of Publications* in which information regarding these deposit libraries, as well as a complete listing of unclassified materials, can be found. This is a selected bibliography, and by no means represents all or even the largest portion of available studies. (I.L.H.)

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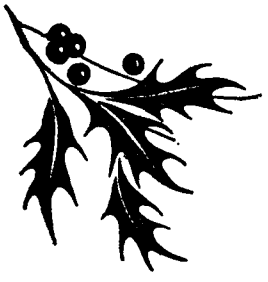

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An Unprofessional Eye . . . . . .

The New Irony: Sickniks and Others

BENJAMIN DEMOTT

Nobody could have predicted the Breakthrough—to give the event a friendly name. For three years the media were clotted with gloomy pieces about the state of the national sense of humor. The *Atlantic* ran essays about the "Vanishing Comedian," Thurber explained in the theater sections that no one could *be* funny any more, the *New York Times Magazine* held symposia on the death of the yock. Cautious periodicals like the *Saturday Review* and the *Saturday Evening Post* asked dark questions. ("Has America Lost Its Sense of Humor?" "Are You Afraid to Laugh?") Incautious ones like the *Nation* hammered out black uncompromising answers—for example, two thousand words of Kenneth Rexroth on "The Decline of American Humor." And the search for causes of sobriety raced on past worry about McCarthy and the H-bomb to public guilt about the coming violation of the moon.

Then all at once (seemingly), in 1959, the sickniks were at hand.

Their emergence was a shade less noisy than that of ordinary Discoveries and Stars; few saw in it the makings of a permanent revolution in comedy. The magazines that had been announcing the banishment of laughter did not print retractions—they simply dropped the subject. *Time* murmured a little about the perfervid "last days of Rome," in a 1959 piece about Messrs. Sahl, Bruce, Lehrer, Adams and others, but it appeared to doubt that the fever would last longer than a season or two. And nowhere was it suggested that the tendencies disparagingly labeled *sick* on their first appearance would shortly win respect in high circles as symptoms of vigorous mental health.

That the sickniks have in fact lasted longer than a season or two is by now, of course, common knowledge. They have brought bonanza cabaret to a half-dozen cities, through appearances at the Blue Angel, the Upstairs and Downstairs of the Downstairs and Upstairs, One Fifth Avenue in New York, the Saddle and Sirloin in Tucson, the Playboy and Mister Kelly's in Chicago, the Living Rooms of Chicago and New York, the hungry i of San Francisco and many other clubs. Their records (the current Schwann catalog lists over a hundred items featuring sick comedians) sell at an extraordinary rate. They have scored theatrical triumphs on and off Broadway, and have even figured in successful efforts to bring permanent, "live" theater to the suburbs. (An improvisatory revue with sick leanings, calling itself "The Premise," came out of the Midwest more than a year ago to Bleecker Street in Greenwich Village, won a following, and later established a company in Westport, Connecticut; the managers claim they intend to "rotate Premise companies" throughout this country and Canada, in order to "share the mutual experience of actors and audience in a nation-wide interplay of ideas.") Musical and subliterary versions of sicknik turns multiply from month to month. Newsstands are crowded with magazines of the new humor (*Mad, Sick* and the like). Sick magicians (performers who mock gullibility) are frequent guests on mass-audience

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TV programs like the Ed Sullivan Show, and sick jokes figure regularly in TV commercials. Sicknik singing groups (the Crown City Four, the New Characters) have built popular reputations with ballads like "Now You Can Watch World War III on Pay TV," or parodies like The Therapists' "Sick-Along-With-Us." And, more striking than any of this, standard comedians whose non-sick turns were developed and refined over a period of decades are themselves toying with the new style. Mr. Joe E. Lewis, whose storytelling for years has centered on "dolls, nags and booze," opened this fall at the Copacabana in New York with a line of patter showing strong sicknik influence. (About equal rights and integration Mr. Lewis remarked: "I've got equal hatred for everybody. . . ." Later he claimed to lead a fully integrated life: "I drink White Label and Black Label.") And a month ago a *Variety* dispatch from Tokyo revealed that Mr. Pinky Lee, an American performer best-known for his work on NBC-TV children's programs, was himself at the edge of conversion ("PINKY LEE MAY JOIN SICK COMICS IF THAT'S WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT").*

As goes without saying, these evidences of popular success could be taken as proof that the nation is ill; in themselves they provide no basis for regarding the sickniks as our only healthy men. The case is, though, that respect for the sick comedian as an important American voice has grown steadily in the past two years. England's elite weeklies recently have been giving thoughtful (and extensive) coverage to the performances of such American visitors as Mr. Tom Lehrer, who has thousands of Soho enthusiasts. And in America *Variety* and the new show business magazines are not alone in treating the new wits seriously. The *New York Times,* reviewing the fall openings of the sick comedians, described one after another as figures who slice "local, national and world politics . . . down to size." *Harper's* printed an essay last summer claiming "universality" for Mr. Jules Feiffer; it described the cartoonist as "an artist of more than local importance," and asserted that his strips are "about the moral problems imposed on *us* by political events." Newspaper critics were dazzled by the "brilliance" of "The Second City," a Chicago revue rather like "The Premise" that opened on Broadway at the end of September. And a year ago a formal gathering (at Tufts University) of scores of professors of American history, literature and art listened attentively to a learned paper on sick comedians as social critics.

The likelihood is small that such a paper would have been scheduled, or that any other elite approval of the sicknik clan would have been forthcoming, if the members of that clan were still relying on jests of the sort that first brought them public notice. (The stages of their advance from these jests will doubtless become a field for research, for the preboom days of the sickniks are already clouded in myth.) The unique and original sicknik note was that of bland brutality. At the beginning the note sounded clearest in certain jokes of traditional two-line form that perhaps were inspired by the art of Charles Addams. ("Mother, why do I keep walking in circles?" "Shut up or I'll nail your other foot to the floor.)" Later more complicated routines were devised. (Mr. Don Adams, an early sicknik, constructed a parody in which the key character is a sick comic. The latter is entertaining a night club crowd with jokes about an airplane crash when he sees in his audience a man whose wife and children were killed in the accident; the comic asks the man to stand for a round of applause. "Now, now," he says chidingly as the father rises. "No tears.") And the taste for brutality has not entirely disappeared. Mr. Lenny Bruce, who came to fame as the defender of Leopold and Loeb ("Bobby

* Such conversions are feasible partly because of the so-called "comedian's services" of New York. These services, which contract to supply comics and "emcees" with monthly collections of topical jokes, have lately been including a proportionally higher quantity of sick material in their pages. The 132nd issue of Mr. Billy Glason's "Fun-Master Monthly" (September, 1961) offered dozens of "humorous views" in the following vein: "Now they've got a chain letter for hypochondriacs. You send your symptoms to five friends and if you're lucky you start an epidemic."

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Franks was *snotty*"), today impersonates a bloodthirsty warden faced with rioting prisoners. "Maybe if we just kill a few for an example . . . about 300." And *Mad* continues to provoke mirth by picturing women in the act of losing their hands in Waring Blendors.

But for most performing sickniks the assumption that you have only to laugh at a basket case and the world will laugh with you has become faintly *démodé*. The most successful of the current breed are men who combine the old business of shrugging at screams with the new business of commenting (in Sahl-like fashion) upon current issues. The sick performer whose star currently rises most swiftly is the Negro comedian Mr. Dick Gregory, who recently completed an immensely successful engagement at the Blue Angel in New York. Mr. Gregory's forty-minute turn was dense with illustrations of the new form, as for example: "That was a brilliant idea of Kennedy, testin' underground. That's where the people going to be." Assumed unconcern about disaster is one of the elements of this joke, as is that staple trope of comedy, *non sequitur*. But at the center lies the wry allusion to national policy. And it was the introduction of such allusions, together with the decision to use casual brutality simply as a means of underlining them, that occasioned uncertainty about "sick" as an adequate label, and induced respectable observers to grant the new wits their present status as "effective social satirists."

Whether the status is deserved, whether the sick comic's effort results in the kind of protest that clarifies moral and political issues, is of course a question. At its best the school is exhilaratingly funny; and its major themes (tolerance, intolerance, opinion-engineering, national self-righteousness, commercialized religion) are, when regarded abstractly, highly promising. Examination of particulars, however, raises doubt as to whether the promise is confirmed.

At the center of the doubt lies a tangle of psychological and semantic difficulties that asks to be described as the modern problem of irony. Contemporary enthusiasm for the rhetorical mode called irony is rarely accompanied by clear understanding either of the nature of the trope or of its effects. Some say that what matters about the ironist is that he always means the opposite of what he says. Others, more sophisticated, say that what matters about the ironist is that his meaning is created in the intermingling of the positive affirmation contained in his words with the negation of that affirmation implied by his tone. He means only part of what he says, and says a good deal that he does not fully mean. As is evident, "sophistication" on this subject does mean complication. But the latter, although a nuisance, is rarely out of place in discussions of meaning; the centuries have produced few literary texts that support simplistic views of irony.

They have, however, produced many that support the notion that irony functions best as an instrument of moral clarification when it is used in a society that is fairly confident of the meanings of, and the relations between, the abstract terms comprising its moral vocabulary. The reason that Jonathan Swift's ambiguities and ironies issue in something more than confusion is partly that an intellect of massive force is controlling them, partly that the moral language of Swift's time was relatively *un*ambiguous. This isn't, of course, to say that when the relations of moral counters become uncertain, when, for example, chastity becomes associated with neurosis rather than with virtue, irony loses all its effectiveness as a rhetorical mode. It is to say that at such moments irony is less useful as a means of sharpening moral issues than as an agent of artificial social cohesion.

The latter point is at once especially pertinent to sicknik wit, and less mysterious than might appear. The ironist steps forth as a self-protecting man; fearing quick assessment he seeks a manner that will convey that he is more complicated than any words he utters can suggest. Exchanging conversational coin with him means entering a secret relation, accepting membership in an exclusive community, marking yourself off from fools. For the ironist's talk constantly posits two listeners: one who is witless, hence capable of understanding nothing except the public, dictionary meanings of the

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words said; another who is quick enough to comprehend that the words spoken add up to more (or less) than their public significance. As this implies, quickness alone can be a bond that creates the community: it is not necessary that quickness be accompanied by faith in the good and the true. For even if the unique society created by the ironist and the knowing audience amounts only to a matching off of "high verbal aptitudes," it still has a working principle of exclusion. And the latter, as is well-known, is the *sine qua non* of a working society.

An inkling of differences in the significance of the community of ironists from age to age can be gained by considering differences in the language of jokes that sometimes develop in periods as short as a half century. Finley Peter Dunne (1867–1936) had a joke that ran as follows: "It takes vice t' hunt vice. That accounts for policemen." A not very sophisticated quip, but one that does assert an identity between vice and policemen (the tone presumably qualifies the assertion). In offering it, Dunne plainly was less concerned to shape his audience into a social community than to point a moral paradox. Mr. Dick Gregory's version of this joke in September 1961 ran as follows: "We have enough cops in Chicago. Just a matter of getting 'em on our side." A subtle shift has occurred. Neither Dunne nor Gregory can speak of virtue (as satirists once could). But where Dunne can speak of vice, Gregory can only allude to "their side" as opposed to "our side." His joke sets policemen and "our side" in antithesis, but, as the possessive pronoun testifies, the relations between this antithesis and concepts like good and evil count for less than the relations between the jokester and his audience. Moral paradox is in process of giving way to social gesture.

Observations as abstract and (let it be said) humorless as these hardly amount to proof that the prime function of sicknik irony is to create a community of knowing folk over against the community of boobish, doltish squares. But they do perhaps define some of the obstacles facing the sick comedian who wishes to use irony as an instrument of moral or social criticism—among them the lack of moral center, and the need to re-create community with each jest. And when the relevant evidence is consulted it becomes plain that these obstacles are themselves anything but abstract. Consider the following assay of sick sallies classified by theme:

1. *Themes of tolerance.* The principal objects of mockery in sicknik handling of these themes are: people who are bitter about the new obstacles to the expression of race hatred that society has succeeded in erecting in recent years; people stupidly overzealous in the cause of civil rights; people for whom rejection of the attitudes of intolerance is a chic gesture, not an awakening of intelligent humanity. The wittiest commentator on the first two groups is Mr. Gregory; Mr. Jules Feiffer is most skillful at mauling the third.

Mr. Gregory's special forte is mock-nostalgia for the days of easy hatred. He regrets that "nothing is free any more, not even hate. Costs you $200 just to join the Ku Klux Klan—and you have to buy your own sheet." But he is almost equally adept at teasing the rhetoric of militant civil rights crusaders: he complains about the lack of "Negro cowboys on Lyndon Johnson's ranch" and of "Negro cops on 'The Untouchables,'" and observes that: "Way things are going, in ten years you going to have to be my color to get a job."* Mr. Feiffer, as indicated, focuses on "friendships" between the urban liberal and the "socially acceptable" Negro. In a mordant strip he tells the story of a Negro who, growing impatient with efforts of whites to prove they are Enlightened, explains curtly to a group of them at a cocktail party: "I didn't look on civil rights as a 'humanist' issue. The way I looked at it was strictly self-interest. You know—like it's been a long wait and I want Mine." At the next party, as the Negro adds in the closing panel, "they had two Negroes—just in case the first one didn't work out."

The effects of such wit are not easy to de-

* A counterpart of jokes of this kind is heard on a Mercury record of the Chicago revue, "The Second City." The skit tells of a figure deeply concerned about minorities who is leaving his home to "protect the Boers in South Africa." One effect of this irony is to suggest that strong concern for the rights of minorities is the mark of a fool.

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fine with precision. At one level the jokes are about the survival of hatred; their source is the conviction that neither hatred nor fear that "you going to have to be my color to get a job" ought to exist. At another level, however, the jokes undercut the effort to contend against the consequences of such hatred and fear. Mr. Gregory mocks the overzealous—but how zealous is overzealous? Mr. Feiffer creates a Negro whose bitterness leads him to experiments in the mode of *épater le bourgeois*—but at what point (surely there is one) does *épater le bourgeois* become inhumane? The single focus of sick criticism in the area of tolerance and intolerance isn't, to be sure, the man who strives to stamp out the bigotry in his own being, rather than the bigot content in his bigotry. But the effect of the body of sick criticism, to judge from these examples and other sicknik material, is to maintain that *all* postures toward the issues in question are absurd. The overt affirmations are that men of hatred ought not to be despised, and that people militant in the face of oppression should be despised; the covert tone of irony qualifies both assertions—but not to the point of absolute denial. For a denial would require an unprotected assertion of the need to love. And to make that assertion would be to throw open the gimcrack gates of the palace of irony—all that separates sophisticated folk from ordinary men of good will. The sicknik cannot open these gates without losing his audience; he cannot keep his audience unless he calls down a plague on every visible house outside.

2. *Themes of Domesticity: Love, Marriage and the Family.* A number of sick jokes with domestic themes are simple variations (sometimes barely variations at all) on Joe Miller material about the war of the sexes. Miss Marion Colby entertained guests at Tucson's Saddle and Sirloin Club last August with one such variation: "I don't want to marry a millionaire," she revealed. "I just want to divorce one." Another can be heard in a recent World Pacific record called "The Best of the Crazy Ads": "Wanted: a pot-bellied stove for husband with similar characteristic." But the best of sick wit in this area does have its own qualities and strengths—chief of them being the intensity of the scorn expressed for the use, for profit, of pieties about the family. The edge of this scorn can be felt in Mr. Adams' turn about the comic who asks a grief-struck father to take a nightclub bow, in innumerable sick magazine take-offs of TV commercials populated with hard-sell Moms and Dads and dogs, and in Mr. Mort Sahl's abuse of the art of Norman Rockwell.

Here again, though, the demand that the private community created by irony not be democratized at any point by nonironic statement blunts the force of the critique. Even as the sicknik asserts that the family ought not to be a commercial gimmick, he is obliged to add that, of course, no wise man could regard the family as anything but an instrument of oppression. His tone abuses profiteers; his overt statements express a view that the family is an institution that itself deserves abuse. (The terms of the abuse are influenced by a perverted tendentious Freudianism—an invention, apparently, of thinkers who read the work of this great man as though it were about *Discontent and Its Discontents,* not about *Civilization and Its Discontents.*) When he attacks artists who have made fortunes out of "healthy domesticity," the sick comic takes as his standard of values that of a homosexual: in September at a New York club called One Fifth Avenue Mr. Stan Freeman, a singing comic who plays the piano, mocked the bright-eyed "family spirit" of Rodgers-Hammerstein scores by using the tunes of shows like "The Sound of Music" as a musical setting for a version of Tennessee Williams' "Summer and Smoke," a play with homosexual themes. When the sick comic deals directly with heterosexualism, he is at pains to hint that it is the last refuge of the psychotic: Mr. Tom Lehrer for years has titillated his audiences with a ballad called "Masochism Tango." When the sick comic speaks of the relations of parents and children, he insists that parental concern is invariably destructive in motive: Mr. Mike Nichols of Nichols and May is assured on the telephone by his mother that, if she could believe his protest that he is absolutely miserable without her, she

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would be the happiest person on earth. And the school even feels obliged to turn open scorn upon the idea of childbearing as an expression of feminine creativity: "The Premise" opened one night last fall with a husband and wife skit in which an argument about money ends with the wife (who is seven feet tall) sitting on the husband (who is four feet tall) and killing him; the show proceeded from here to a news report asserting that an "Italian scientist has discovered a way of creating an embryo outside the human body"—and at the conclusion of the report a woman's voice backstage cried out in joy: "Thank God!"

Jokes of this sort are not designed solely to put down the Madison Avenue Mommonger; their ultimate target is the out-of-town square. If the latter could be ignored, the comedian might stop with a question about why the profit-makers are allowed to debase mothers, fathers and familial strength. But this is not an *excluding* question: ordinary people can and do ask it. The excluding question is: why should anybody *care* about this debasement? Not until he asks this question does the ironist close his society. For while hatred of the exploiters is open to the Many, only the Few can accept the contention that there is nothing decent to be exploited—no successful or happy marriages, nothing except hypocrisy in the relation of parents to children, no meaning in the creation of life.

3. Religious themes. The point holds also for sicknik treatment of religious themes. Irony in this area cannot stop at protests about the commercialization of religion and religious institutions; it must go on to imply that all religious belief, commercialized or not, is pure superstition. Mr. Lenny Bruce has two routines that offer versions of men of faith. In one of them he impersonates the evangelist Oral Roberts in telephone conversation with the Pope. "Hey, John, what's shaking, Baby? . . . Billy Graham wants to know if you can get him a deal on these Eyetalian sports cars." In the other, Mr. Bruce is robed and brogued as a sentimental priest named Father Flotski, spending an hour with a killer in the deathhouse ("Killing six children doesn't make anybody all bad," the priest purrs comfortingly.) In both turns men of faith are characterized (as they have been thousands of times before) as fools or greedy opportunists. But Mr. Bruce, caught like his confreres in the whirl of social irony, can hardly don the mantle of the clerical reformer. He must proceed to blasphemy—which is to say, to a declaration that, whether commercialized or not, religion is in essence a racket. Mr. Bruce has no qualms about traveling this far (he shouts aloud: "God is rotten!"), and others share his enthusiasm for the trip.*

4. Public Relations, Patriotism, National Policy. Sicknik wit is at its most potent in the first of these areas. There are lapses of taste, of course. American idolatry of fund drives is mocked by a writer named Sy Reit, who has produced a series of "Little Known Medical Crusades" for a sick comedy magazine. Among Reit's ploys were lapel buttons bearing strange legends ("Lick CHAPPED Lips," "Join the WAR on WARTS," "Fight FRECKLES," "Blast BBB Bad Breath"), a coin can labelled: "Annual Fund Drive Ingrown Toe-nail Appeal," and a poster on behalf of an antiblackhead "drive" that read in part: "Help Put the Squeeze on a Dreaded Disease." But on other fronts the eye of the sicknik is surer. A wit named Jackie Kahane regaled the Chicago Living Room late last summer with a version of income tax chicanery that presented Al Capone explaining possible deductions to his tax accountant ("Under Entertainment: one St. Valentine's Day Surprise Party"). And in one of the most telling sick turns Mr. Bob Newhart mocks speech writers and public relations men by placing them in a heroic, nineteenth-century context that dramatizes their triviality: a writer and a p.r. man are shown persuading Abraham Lincoln to accept a draft of an address to be delivered at Gettysburg.

This remarkable comic contrivance is itself not fully in control of its irony. What

* The "boldest" mockery is that in "The Premise," which has a skit in which God, the central character, is shown delightedly playing games with the weather, in order, as He says, "to wreck Hell out of a weekend."

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begins as an effective assault on cynicism and opinion-engineering ends, oddly, in allegations that Lincoln was a bumbling stupid man. But there is a more important reason for dissatisfaction with sicknik comment in this general area than that the irony sometimes goes out of control within a specific turn. It is that the sicknik has neither the means nor the inclination to distinguish corruption from its opposite. Faced by the need to see around Everything, he races on from abuse of cynical profiteers to abuse of all national policy, from allegations of corruption and incompetence in private men, to allegations of corruption and incompetence everywhere. As a result his effect is to "prove" that all American experience is of the same despicable p.r. piece: there is no place for truth or selflessness, hence no reason to become agitated about any particular depravity. The notion that vital decisions of American policy are in the hands of brutes is offered by the players of "The Premise," who represent a group of moronic soldiers as custodians of the bomb button; and again by Mr. Gregory, who knows that "Kennedy's button is in Caroline's playroom." Lectures on the American way as ever the way of the idiot have become standard items. Mr. Gregory observes that "You don't have to worry about the Russians, let them get to the moon and stars, we'll still be the first country to give them foreign aid." "The Premise" company performs with relish a skit in which heads of African or Asian states meet at the home of Allen Dulles to work out a settlement of differences. After minutes of negotiation dense with allusions to rich uncles in the East and West, the heads of state leap up in a paroxysm of glee at an ingenious whispered solution to their dispute: "Total War!" And the impression gradually built up by the irony is not only that America is finished ("The only thing we're ahead of the Russians in is strikes!" "The Civil Defense boys are closed on weekends and Khrushchev knows it!"), but that it ought to be finished, that nothing in its past or present deserves to survive.

Ways of implying this are of course various. Mr. Bruce's method is overt statement: he ends an ironic threnody by crying out that "The flag is rotten." Mr. Gregory suggests the propriety of dismantling the union state by state. ("We can't have the whole United States fighting Cuba, looks bad. We so big. Why not just one state? Maybe Florida. What the hell. We lose, all we lose is a state.") And certainly the idea that peeps out through the irony in all this—namely, that American purity has been so badly violated by commercial manipulators that there is nothing left worth preserving—is, at first encounter, arresting. It's too late, we've gone too far toward degradation, we've spent our fortunes wretchedly, there are no fresh possibilities ahead. . . . Before long, though, repetition blunts the attack. The ironists survive, the night club becomes a club in some half-genuine sense; but the "satire" seems hardly less mechanical a gesture than rich folks' conversation about servants.

5. *Culture, Self-improvement, Wisdom.* The sick wit does not limit himself to the contention that all modern fatuity and venality belong to the generalized life of the times. He often descends from the large institution to the small particular, and is especially eager to mock the self-deluded individual searcher for light. The role of such mockery in re-establishing that the audience is a community of the elect needs no comment—but the mockery does have some force. The sicknik's self-characterization as a man who has "gone beyond" worship of monuments of art to a recognition of their uselessness is a corrective (of a kind) to self-indulgent people who think of art as a personal refuge. Such praise should probably not be offered for the self-characterization of Mr. Joe E. Lewis, whose current turn finds space (surprisingly) for some irony about Shelley and Keats, or for that of Mr. Milt Kamen, who describes Hamlet (on a Capital record) as "that nervous kid." But conceivably it is appropriate for the skit that won acclaim in New York for the "Second City" troupe. The skit, which is about a Great Books Seminar, presents these community efforts at adult self-improvement as occasions on which stupidity and insensitivity congratulate themselves in

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public; the seminar degenerates into whining psychologizing monologues, and the players take off the pathetic pretentiousness of ladies who say earnestly: " I had my first catharsis after reading *Oedipus Rex*."

But here as elsewhere the problem of ironic limits and proportions remains. The ladies' search for wisdom is the target of satire: but can wisdom itself escape the blow? As it happens, wisdom becomes a target in one of the subtlest and shrewdest pieces in the whole sick repertory—the chess-playing sketch first performed at the Bleecker Street Premise. In this sketch a bearded young man, a Washington Square bench sitter, invites a girl who is crossing the park to sit down with him and play a game of chess. The girl does not know the game; her conversation reveals that her head is filled with sayings that are to be regarded, as the audience learns from the tone of the performance, as bits of jargon; she is obviously in analysis. Her partner tutors her gently in the lore of the game and she listens, occasionally chewing at her wrist abruptly or uttering an irrelevant remark that hints at violence in her past. As they begin to play it becomes apparent that the girl is taking this occasion to test out a series of aphorisms, certain items of good counsel bearing on the relations between individual freedom and social restraint, that she has been offered by her doctor. The irony is aimed first at the bearded man, whose own purposes are not benign; then at the girl, whose mannerisms are over-hip; finally at the aphorisms themselves. The bearded man advises the tyro against one move that she is contemplating, on the ground that to make this move means wasting a pawn. Her eyes bright, quick, knowing, suspicious, the girl answers in a singsong: "If you can waste in little ways, you can waste in big ways." The bearded man chides her a moment later for making an illegal move and she responds: "You're really hung up on the rules. I used to be. Now I make my own rules." And, before the sketch has ended, a dozen observations that, viewed in their proper context, might be thought worthy of respect as good sense, have been laid out as objects for scorn.

As the sketch rolls onward toward the destruction of the analyst's "advice," the audience is shaken almost to tears in laughter. And the source of part of its amusement can be described as "traditional." The girl confuses life situations with game situations; the jokes are, at one level, variations on the conflict of contexts theme that has provided matter for ten thousand *New Yorker* cartoons. (Two butterflies are on a daisy in a polo field with poloists bearing down upon a ball at rest just beneath them; the caption, a speech of one of the butterflies, connects the language of teenagers incongruously with the situation of pastoral: "The first one to fly off is chicken.")

But in the end the laughter is quite *un*traditional—a mere gesture of knowingness. It is, however, laughter at the level toward which sicknik humor ultimately aspires. Why so? Because, to begin with, the situation that occasions it is not easily penetrable by the commonality of men; only a small minority of the world knows enough about analysis to appreciate the bearings of the girl's remarks. Second, the audience is further removed from commonality by the invitation to see around the psychiatrist's advice: it is asked to become a group that, because it "has been through it all," not only understands that advice from analysts is fraudulent and commonplace, but knows where better advice may be found. That there may be no better advice, that wisdom, even from an analyst, does not speak in a highly complicated tongue—these truths are cast out of account. The audience is upon its eminence, delighted by the view: how many people, after all, can laugh simultaneously at those who seek wisdom (and cannot use it), *and* at wisdom itself—the few bare shards of human knowledge about the tensions between society and self? To be one of them is, for a moment, to be better than the wisest men who have lived.

Study of this classic bit of sick humor discloses once again where the new irony must begin and end. It must begin in gestures that create an elite group; it must end not in positions but in universal hostility—hostility to *all* positive assertion, rejection

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of any lines of intelligence available to ordinary men. The one truth the new irony has to tell is that the man who uses it has no place to stand except in momentary community with those who seek to express a comparable alienation from other groups. The one conviction it expresses is that there are really no sides left: no virtue to oppose to corruption, no wisdom to oppose to cant. The one standard it accepts is that on which the simple man—the untutored nonironist who fancies (in his dolthood) that he knows what good and bad should mean—is registered as the zero of our world, a cipher worth nothing but uninterrupted contempt.

If this is true, if the sicknik is ultimately the man who knows nothing, why has he attracted the highbrow attention mentioned before? Why are his successes not merely commercial but reputable? What has he to offer people who do not think of their lives as attempts to fill vacancy? Surely his promise of community would have to be richer than anything described thus far to win the praise of such folk? His promise is richer, of course, and its precise terms demand to be spelled out in plain form. But to undertake this without acknowledging the links between the sick wits and important schools of contemporary philosophy and art would be less than fair, for these links undoubtedly have much to do with the sicknik's soaring reputation. Mr. Kenneth Allsop of England, writing in a recent issue of *Twentieth Century,* remarked about sick humor that:

> . . . there is a common factor to it all. It is Jewish and urban. Almost all the new iconoclasts are Jewish, and theirs might be seen as a logical extension into the hydrogen bomb age of the Central European Jewish deflationary humor of an earlier generation, that of Perelman and Bemelmans, the kind that in 1938 Goebbels condemned as 'the destructive methods of a Jewish-infected minority, the jokes that cease to be jokes when they touch the holiest matters of the national life.' Indeed it is when a nation begins regarding itself as holy that the function of the debunker becomes most valuable. And if megalomania becomes chronic, the more savage must the surgery be.

This writer's emphasis on the consideration of Jewishness betrays little knowledge of the variousness of the American Jewish community (the latter supports the most firmly idealistic monthly published in this country, *Commentary);* but his reminder that the Nazis themselves inveighed against negativistic Jewish humor is valuable. On the one hand it is a warning against easy moralizing about the sickniks. On the other it points directly toward the fear of piety, the fear of seeming to be unaware of the consequences of intense ideological commitment, that haunts the modern imagination, and inevitably inclines it to support any attack upon pretenses of holiness. As evidence of this inclination there is more to instance than the popularity of the sick comics: there is the extraordinary reception that greeted the Angry novelists of England, and the continuing allegiance of younger thinkers to what is called the existential view of life.

That there are links between the Sicks and the Angries needs no lengthy demonstration. Hostility to culture and political concern, ferocious contempt for authority and power, a strong conviction of the tides of unreason in the course of public events and individual lives—these marks of sicknik wit are recognizable in every line that Kingsley Amis (*Lucky Jim* and *I Like It Here*), J. P. Donleavy (*Ginger Man*) and Terry Southern (*The Magic Christian*) have written. And the line of comedy at the edge of brutality that these and other less important figures of the school bring to mind relates, in turn, to the existential concept of the Absurd. It is no more fanciful to connect the horrific corpse humor of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying,* or the wounding chaos of Nathanael West's *Miss Lonelyhearts,* with Meursault's withdrawal of feeling from his mother in Camus' *The Stranger* than it is to connect the cruelty to his wife of Donleavy's Sebastian Dangerfield with *Mad* cartoons about women losing their hands in kitchen appliances, or with sicknik jokes about basket cases. The items named all are part of a single configuration of culture. Nor will it do to think of this configuration as a literary production or invention. For

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one reason, too much "unshaped" experience seems to fall into the pattern in question.* For another, too many writers who brooded deeply about the "modern situation"—long before any Angry sneered at sober truth—concluded that there is a significant relation between humor and a developed sense of the meaning of tragic suffering. In a famous sermonic essay, "Humor and Faith," Reinhold Niebuhr made a religious case for the usefulness of comedy, even as he noted that when issues beyond the immediate incongruities of life are raised, humor must "move toward faith or sink into despair." And Kierkegaard himself claimed:

> The more one suffers the more, I believe, one has a sense for the comic. It is only by the deepest suffering that one acquires true authority in the use of the comic, an authority which by one word transforms as by magic the reasonable creature one calls man into a caricature.

In other words, approval of the sickniks stems in part from awareness that wholehearted acceptance of common pieties may prepare the way for such madness as nazism, and does inhibit understanding of the existentialist injunction: "You must change your life." Men of sense are assured that no one will respond to this injunction until conscious of the emptiness of the words he has been accustomed to live by; they are also convinced that the injunction *must* be heeded—that the self must undertake to free itself from unindividuated responsibilities, positions and assumptions long enough to breathe its own unique air. Hence they conclude that the pieties must be mocked, and that the mockers must be respected—the laughing comics along with the elevated and difficult artists of the school of the Absurd.

If there is truth in all this, however, there is less in the contention that the thrust of an existential challenge can be felt under the circumstances in which the sickniks perform. The man who visits the Blue Angel on 55th Street in New York to listen to the latest sick patter enters a situation in which it is difficult to translate any words into admonitions to change his life or into lessons in the grammar of chaos. A tiny room with satinish quilted walls; furry, smoke-laden darkness torn by white beams directed at a stage where boyish Irish exotics thump cheerful guitars and shout filthy limericks about One-eyed Reilly; voices yelping in high, hysterical, half-drunken laughter; a sour waiter delivering a check for two totaling sixteen dollars (after two drinks and forty minutes)—this perhaps is not a world in which men contemplate the truth of their limp passivity and discover the inner vibrancy that cries to go free.* And for that reason, among others, the sicknik

* The following letter appeared recently in the Mail Call column of the *Boston Globe*. "Dear Mail Call Readers: Must a fairly attractive girl of 25 resign herself to spinsterhood because she has two physical 'strikes' against her. My experience with eligible Boston males during the two years I've lived here leads me to think so. The first strike against me is my height—5 feet, 9 inches barefoot. Boston men don't date amazons! My second strike, and the worst, is represented by a missing right leg. An accident in 1954 left me one-legged and Boston men just aren't interested in girls with legs off and crutches. (I can't wear an artificial leg, but get about very well with the remaining leg and a pair of short metal 'sticks.') Personality, poise and sociability just don't seem to make up for my shortcomings. I'm a native of Chicago, and until my family moved here I led a fairly active life despite my height and missing leg. But that's all changed here in Boston. I've explored all the usual avenues for meeting the opposite sex—church groups, "Y" get-togethers, family parties, etc.—but I have struck out. Working as a stenographer, I rub elbows with hordes of eligible males but get only friendly 'Hellos' and 'Goodbyes.' The closest I've come to striking a romantic spark was at a lake a few weeks ago, while I lingered in waist-high water at the foot of a pier. I was flirted with in a friendly way by fellows in a canoe, who, despite my protests, insisted on pulling me into their craft. You can imagine their reaction to seeing me come up over the side stump first. I was 'ditched' as soon as the minimum obligations of chivalry were fulfilled. Any tips you Mail Callers may have will be greatly appreciated." The letter was signed: "ONE LONG LEG."

* Where the prices are lower the hum of distraction is not necessarily quieter. At "The Premise" customers sit with their feet on the raised platform that is the stage; they drink coffee and read the *World Telegram* waiting for the performance to begin. And the rhetoric of the performers themselves—their insistent claims that they are simply following suggestions made by the audience—enforces the sense of the occasion as an "entertainment" purely, not a potential moment of transformation.

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nightclub fails to qualify, even when the abstract connections between sick humor and theories of the Absurd are solemnly noted, as an existential community in embryo.

The truth about sicknik community, to come at last to that, is that there is nothing vague about the honors and privileges to be obtained by joining it. Other societies extend only the "right to belong"; this society extends new, unimagined identities—that of The Patriot as Laughing Man, and that of the Timemaster or Prophet. In a sense it is improper to describe the Patriot as Laughing Man as a new creation. For at least a century an article of the national faith has been that goodness equals laughter, that the sense of humor can banish crisis, that if you pack up your troubles and smile, horror will take to the caves. But, as mentioned earlier, there was a time in the late 1950's when the assumptions were shaken. The sick comedian offers his listener a chance to act as if he had not been shaken, to demonstrate that he is at bottom the Good American—because, in the face of no matter what madness, no matter what profound difficulty, he "still is able to laugh," he still retains his eye for "the smiling aspects of life" and refuses to give himself over to dark gothic pessimism, to old European gloom. Brilliant to test underground, that's where the people will be: to snicker at this *non sequitur* is to climb out from under the pressure of the inexplicable and the unbearable. The remoteness of the decision-makers, the increasing alienation of individual democratic man from the authorities he has "chosen"—these cease to trouble, once the citizen joins a saturnalia that assures him of the survival of his power to "catch on to the joke." As he roars at jests about Negroes and Jews ("What will they say when the first Negro Astronaut takes off?" . . . "The jig is up." "In the Israeli space program how do they spell nosecone?" . . . "Nose-Cohen.") he successfully has it both ways. He laughs at nasty folks who say "jig" and also at the hypocritical enlightened who think their refusal to use the word proves their readiness to love—but, more to the point, in the mists of this laughter he sheds awareness of the facts of brutality against which in open air an open heart still knows it must contend. Hilarity becomes the location—a little hill not of truth but of cigar butts and swizzle sticks—where shame of self passes away, and an original smiling goodness returns. And it *is* an American goodness: this is all-important. The nation invented the concept of virtue as laughter; chuckles are in the American grain as stars and stripes are in the flag. Hence to laugh—even at the flag itself—can be a way of recovering one's being as a patriot, a true winter soldier of modern times.

But then beyond this lies a gift of selfhood even more greatly to be prized. The most valuable offer of the sick ironist, as of the existential novelist, is the invitation to join him in mastery of time itself. Whether the need for this mastery is the deepest need of urban American man is not certain; the truth that the age is like the eye of a tornado, the society the most rapidly shifting in the history of man, does not prove that a way to control the sense of onrush lies at the center of modern longing. But if not at the center, then close to it—and the sicknik, together with dozens of existentialist novelists, has the key to the "method" of control. What is the method? That of rushing the onrush, moving history at a pace faster than any hitherto reported, speeding up the camera, announcing tomorrow's diseases and disasters today, displacing the reality of present time with pronouncements about the reality of tomorrow ("Now You Can Watch World War III on Pay TV"). On one view the trick involves offering prophecy as reportage. On the other it involves a refusal to accept the notion that particulars are not generals. Did not the death camps exist? Then the world is a death camp. Have we not created world-destroying bombs? Then the world has already been destroyed. Do we not live in a world of mass-think communications? Then no one has a mind of his own.

There are, of course, some men who claim to see through the tricks just mentioned. The Englishman Richard Hoggart, for example, writing in 1957 after patient,

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serious scrutiny of the evidence, declared:

> There may be some prophetic truth in discussions about 'the vast anonymous masses with their thoroughly dulled responses.' But so far working-class people are by no means as badly affected as that sentence suggests, because with a large part of themselves they are just 'not there,' are living elsewhere, living intuitively, habitually, verbally, drawing on myth, aphorism and ritual. This saves them from some of the worst effects of the present. . . .

As a non-Establishment voice, Hoggart could exact at least a show of respect from the new prophet class. But those who object to doom-crying are far more often voices of puerile philistinism and obliviousness than of practical, sensitive belief in the possibility of accurate historical assessment. And even at their best they can make no grants of instant selfhood and community. To be of their company requires labor (below the eye of the storm)—not to speak of knowledge. Whereas knowledge is precisely the burden that the audience is being shown how to shuck off. The sick comic speaks of "facing the realities of the time," and runs on to name those realities in terms remote from any known except by people who "pay covers" and "drink up minimums." He insists that there is no place to hide from the facts, and engages in an ironic transformation of facts. He overtly asserts that people must be "abreast of the times," and his tone proclaims that there is no selfhood for those who are not ahead of the times, possessed of an age not yet known to the generality. History is moving, today does not exist, the future is today: let us rush toward it together and claim it as ours alone. Are "they" making progress in Georgia toward genuine integration? In New York, then, let us tell taller tales of the death of jigs. ("They makin' a new all-colored movie. *Stagecoach South*. Sammy Davis going to have a real swinging part.") Do we seek to negotiate with the Russians to prevent thermonuclear disaster? Yes, we are negotiating *now*—but now is not real: tomorrow we shall be burning, let us burn tonight. Chaos is our future, let it therefore be at hand at this instant.

Against this crazed running of the sun, this identity-mongering that is bereft of feeling for general fact, general life, there is more than a little to be urged. Against the claim that time will wash you away if you seek to stand still in it and *with*stand, it can be argued with force that time makes men no more than men make time. The pace of the age is a human contrivance, lives in the human imagination only, is ours to alter. We make our time as the Bantu make theirs, and those who "report" our pace do not merely report but create it. The sicknik and the novelist of the Absurd are Greenwich to themselves, tolling bells awakening others in the discontinuity of nightmares undreamed by some who are awake. ("Want some good news?" cries Mr. Gregory to the hard-drinking, time-maddened moderns of the Blue Angel. "Sixty-three witchdoctors joined the Blue Cross!") Their message is: Let go the calendar, the seasons are spent. But the seasons are public devices, and others beside prophets still have the right to read them—and the particulars of their turning—according to the general light.

Will the right be exercised? By refusing to exercise it people find a way out of the central tension of intelligence in this time —that between the desire to know and act, and the disabling fear that it is too late to know and act. They also learn answers to the old questions set by slick magazines. ("Yes we've found our sense of humor! Yea we've licked our fears! Yea we're not afraid to laugh!") And in repeating these answers they achieve unique selves—as good prophets, laughing Americans, harriers of time who won't be late for appointments they never made. But the likelihood is slight that everyone will find advantage in the terms that knowingness proffers. For the sake of self much can be sacrificed—any number of fools or flags or doting Mums. But the contract offered does finally specify that in exchange for an instant of selfhood you must consent to go to hell on another man's schedule. And even now, with "Kennedy's bombs" and other sicknik inventions raining on our square and selfless shelters, we may think of some personal objection against signing that dotty line.

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If You Don't Mind My Saying So. . . . . .

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

We often say of a person that he "looks young for his age" or "old for his age." Yet even in the more extreme of such cases we seldom go very far astray in guessing what his age actually is. And this means, I suppose, that almost invariably age reveals itself by easily recognizable signs engraved on both the body and the mind. "Young for his age" means only the presence of some minor characteristic not quite usual. Stigmata quite sufficient for diagnosis are nevertheless there. An assumption of youth, or the presence of a few youthful characteristics, deceives no more successfully than rouge or dyed hair. "Looking young for your age" means "for your age" and it means no more.

A mind expressing itself in words may reveal itself a little less obviously as old or young. Its surface loses its bloom and submits to its wrinkles in ways less immediately obvious than the body does. Youth may be, and often is, skeptical, cynical or despairing; age may be idealistic, believing and much given to professions of optimism. But there is, nevertheless, always a subtle difference in the way in which supposedly similar opinions are held. The pessimism of the young is defiant, anxious to confess or even exaggerate its ostensible gloom, and so exuberant as to reveal the fact that it regards its ability to face up to the awful truth as more than enough to compensate for the awfulness of that truth. Similarly the optimism of age protests too much. If it proclaims that the best is yet to be, it always arouses, at least in the young, either a suspicious question or perhaps the exclamation of the Negro youth who saw on a tombstone the inscription, "I am not dead but sleeping." "Boy, you ain't fooling nobody but yourself."[1]

We may say of some unfortunates that they were never young. We cannot truthfully say of anyone who has succeeded in entering deep into his sixties that he was never old. Those famous lines of the Greek Anthology with which a fading beauty dedicates her mirror at the shrine of a goddess reveal a wise attitude:

> Venus take my votive glass,
> Since I am not what I was,
> What from this day I shall be,
> Venus, let me never see.

No good can come of contemplating the sad, inevitable fact that once youth has passed "a worse and worse time still succeeds the former." But there are at least two reasons for contemplating one's *mind* in even a cracked mirror. One is that there sometimes are real although inadequate compensations in growing old. Serenity, if one is fortunate enough to achieve it, is not so good as joy, but it is something. Even to be "from hope and fear set free" is at least better than to have lost the first without having got rid of the second. The other reason (and the one with which I am here concerned) is that one thus becomes inclined to inquire of any opinion, or change of opinion, whether it represents the wisdom of experience or is only the result of the difference between youth and age which

[1] The very fact that I recount this anecdote without apology, and without any sense that it tends to perpetuate a stereotype insulting to a race that has suffered too many such, is evidence enough that I myself am what the sentimental gobbledygook of the present day calls "a senior citizen" or one who has entered upon "the golden years."

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is as inevitable as the all too obvious physical differences. One may be exasperatingly aware that if the answer is favorable it will be judged such only by those of one's own age. But at least the question has been raised. Many readers of this department no doubt discount certain of my opinions for the simple reason that they can guess pretty accurately, even if they have never actually been told, what my age is. At least I should like them to know that I know these discounts are being made.

Let me then (and in public) glance into the mirror. I have known some men and women who said that the selves they are told about or even remember seem utter strangers to them now; that their remote past is as discontinuous with their present selves, as lacking in any conscious likeness to their mature personality, as the self of a butterfly may be imagined discontinuous with that of the caterpillar it once was. For my part I find it difficult to conceive such a state of affairs. I have changed and I have reversed opinions; but I am so aware of an uninterrupted continuity of the persona or ego that I see only as absurd the tendency of some psychologists from Heraclitus to Pirandello and Proust to regard consciousness as no more than a flux amid which nothing remains unchanged. So far as I am concerned, the child is unmistakably father to the man, despite the obvious fact that child and father differ greatly—sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse.

Fundamental values, temperament and the way in which one approaches a conviction change less, of course, than specific opinions. That fact is very clearly illustrated in the case of the many present-day intellectuals who were Communists or near-Communists in their youth and are now so extremely conservative (or reactionary, as many would say) that they can define no important political conviction that does not seem so far from even a centrist position as to make the distinction between Mr. Nixon and Mr. Khrushchev for them hardly worth noting. But in ways more fundamental than specific political opinions they are still what they always were: passionate, sure without a shadow of doubt of whatever it is that they are sure of, capable of seeing black and white only and, therefore, committed to the logical extreme of whatever it is they are temporarily committed to.

To those of my readers who find many of my opinions morally, or politically, or sociologically antiquated (and I have reason to know that there are some such), I would like to say what I have already hinted, namely, that some of my opinions may indeed be subject to some discount on the simple ground that I am no longer young and therefore incapable of being youthful of mind. But I will also remind them that I have always been inclined to skepticism, to a kind of Laodicean lack of commitment so far as public affairs are concerned; so that, although not as eager as I once was to be disapproved of, I can still resist prevailing opinions.

At about the age of twelve I became a Spencerian liberal, and I have always considered myself a liberal of some kind even though the definition has changed repeatedly since Spencer became a reactionary. Several times in my youth I voted the Socialist ticket, but less because I was a Socialist than because I was not either a Republican or a Democrat, and I voted for Franklin Roosevelt every time he was a candidate. Yet during the years when I was on the staff of the *Nation,* I tried to the limit the patience of the editors on almost every occasion when I was permitted to write an editorial having a bearing on a political or social question.

Never once during the trying thirties did I come so close to succumbing to the private climate of opinion as to grant Russian communism even that most weasel-worded of encomiums "an interesting experiment." There are few things of which I am prouder than of that unblemished record. Many of my friends at the time thought that I had received a well-deserved condemnation when Lincoln Steffens denounced me in a review of one of my books as a perfect example of the obsolete man who could understand and sympathize only with the dead past. But he, as I can now retort,

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was the man who could see so short a distance ahead that after a visit to Russia he gave voice to the famous exclamation: "I have seen the future and it works."

The favorite excuse of those who have now recanted their approval of communism is that they did not know how things would develop. With this excuse I have never been much impressed. There was, it seems to me, enough in the openly declared principles and intentions of Russian leaders to alienate honorable men without their having to wait to see how it would turn out.

Once many years ago I sat at dinner next to Arthur Train, and the subject of the *Nation* came up. He asked me suddenly, "What are *your* political opinions?" "Well," I replied, "some of my colleagues on the paper regard me as a rank reactionary." After a moment's thought he replied, "That still leaves you a lot of latitude." And I suppose it did.

I never have been, and am not now, any kind of utopian. When I first came across Samuel Johnson's pronouncement, "the remedy for the ills of life is palliative rather than radical," it seemed to me to sum up the profoundest of political and social truths. It will probably explain more of my attitudes toward society than any other phrase or principle could.

Why did I choose to fill these pages in this particular issue with this mixture of rather tenuous reflections and autobiography? The reason is, I think, my awareness that my remarks last quarter on pacifism may well have served to confirm the opinion of some that my tendency to skepticism and dissent gets us nowhere, and that I am simply too old to hope. I would, however, like to suggest that, wrong though I may be, the tendency to see dilemmas rather than solutions is one of which I have been a victim ever since I can remember, and therefore not merely a senile phenomenon. I know that one must act. But one need not always be sure that the action is either wise or conclusive.

Apropos of what some would call cynicism, I remember an anecdote the source of which I forget. It concerns a small-town minister who staged an impressive object lesson by confining a lion and a lamb together in the same cage outside his church door. Not only his parishioners, but the whole town and, ultimately, the whole county were enormously impressed by this object lesson. One day he was visited by a delegation of would-be imitators who wanted to know his secret. "How on earth do you manage it? What is the trick?" "Why," he replied, "it is perfectly simple; there is no trick involved. All you have to do is put in a fresh lamb from time to time." Cynical? Blasphemous? Not really, it seems to me. The promise that the lion and the lamb will lie down together was given in the future tense. It is not something that can be expected to happen now.

Without really changing the general subject, I take this opportunity to confess that I am troubled by doubts, not only about pacifism, but also when asked to join in the protest against a law that most of those who consider themselves humane and liberal seem to regard as obviously barbarous; namely, the law that prescribes the death penalty for murder when there seem to be no extenuating circumstances. It is not that I am unaware of the force of their strongest contention. Life, they say, should be regarded as sacred and, therefore, as something that neither an individual nor his society has a right to take away. In fact I cannot imagine myself condemning a man to the noose or the electric chair if I had to take, as an individual, the responsibility for his death. Just as I know I would make a bad soldier even though I cannot sincerely call myself a pacifist, so too I would not be either a hangman by profession or, if I could avoid it, even a member of a hanging jury. Despite these facts the question "Should no murderer ever be executed?" seems to me to create a dilemma not to be satisfactorily disposed of by a simple negative answer.

Punishment of the wrongdoer, so liberals are inclined to say, can have only three possible justifications: revenge, reformation or deterrent example. The first of these, they go on, is barbarous; neither of the other two seems, on the basis of the evidence,

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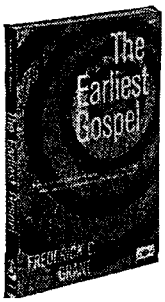

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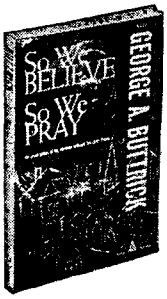

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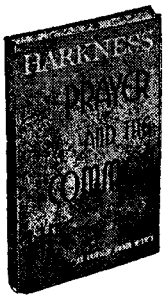

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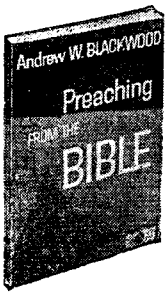

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actually to achieve the result hoped for. The criminal is not reformed, and the punishment meted out to him does not deter others from committing the same crime.

Grant, for the sake of argument, that all this is true. There remains a fourth, seldom mentioned but possible justification: the bandit cannot attack again during the period of his incarceration, and the murderer who has been hanged cannot murder again. Ought the latter be humanely given his second chance, or does the law-abiding citizen have an even greater right to protection?

Even those who, like myself, read newspapers only occasionally can hardly be unaware of the fact that an astonishing proportion of seriously criminal acts are committed by those who have a record, frequently a long one, of other offenses, usually of gradually increasing violence. This proves, it may be said, that punishment as now administered does not reform the criminal. But it is equally true that the bandit could not have managed another armed robbery if he had still been in prison, and the killer could not have killed again had he been sent to the electric chair. We spared his life, but in so doing we took another and perhaps an innocent life.

I have collected no large dossier, but I did some time ago make a note of two cases reported in the local paper within a period of a few weeks. One concerned the case of one Joseph Corbett convicted of the kidnap-murder of Adolph Coors. Corbett, said the AP dispatch, was "an escaped California murderer." About two weeks before the same newspaper reported the case of another man who had previously served a twenty-year sentence for manslaughter and had now killed two others before doing away with himself. Here, within a very short period of time, three men had lost their lives because two known killers had been again let loose upon society. Would it have been more barbarous to take their lives than it was to take, indirectly, the lives of three presumably innocent men? Who has the best right (if, as it seems, one must choose between them): a known killer or the still unknown person who may be his next victim? If the liberal humanitarian knew that he himself might be exposed to the attack of the murderer whom he had saved, would he still wish to save him ?

Eve

After she ate the apple
and knew she had made her bed,
I think that Eve smiled softly
and patted the snake on the head.

HANNAH KAHN

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Reviewing the Reviewers

"Against criticism," said Goethe, "we can neither protect nor defend ourselves; we must act in despite of it, and gradually it resigns itself to this." On the other hand, such wisdom is sometimes difficult to maintain and it is easy to sympathize with the artist, be he writer, painter or composer, who says, "We wish to learn from our critics but it is hard for us even to recover from them. A fool's reproach has an edge like a razor and his brother's praise is small consolation. Critics are like bees: one sting lasts longer than a dozen jars of honey."

In this issue the SCHOLAR *brings an open forum, of which the following writers of recently published books have chosen to take advantage. Needless to say, if the reviewer in question in any case wishes to speak back, he may have his rebuttal, but because such exchanges might take on some of the aspects of perpetual cyclical motion, these replies must be limited to two hundred words each.* —THE EDITOR

JAY WILLIAMS *on the reviewing of his* THE FORGER.[1]

It is not true that authors are, as a class, grim, disgruntled types who drink too much and are incapable of discussing anything but their own work and the income tax bite. Most of us are as gruntled as anybody else, and many are quite capable of speaking on a wide variety of subjects from baseball to football. Furthermore, authors are a wide-eyed, innocent breed distinguished for their irrepressible hopefulness. Book after book, they hope for good sales, for unexpected prizes, for movie contracts, for recognition and love. Above all, they hope for intelligent, constructive reviewing from the dozens of literary critics who range themselves in an Ironic Curtain between the author and his public. This hope is always, except for a few cases, doomed to disappointment.

The few cases are the serious, professional reviewers—Orville Prescott, John K. Hutchens and Maurice Dolbier among others—who devote themselves as soberly to the job of reading, comparing and judging as the author has to writing. A downright adverse review from such a critic may be devastating, but no author can complain that his book has not been carefully read, carefully evaluated and carefully eviscerated by a skilled hand. Such specialists are, however, in the minority. What is far commoner is that the novel over which the author has groaned, bled and sweated for a year or more is dropped naked and defenseless into an arena swarming with beasts of prey.

It is common practice for a novel to be reviewed by other novelists. Thus, inevitably, they either will go out of their way to be affable—since they never know when the man they are reviewing may suddenly be reviewing *them*—or will take the opportunity to explain how *they* would have written the book, given the chance. More grisly still is the custom of giving certain novels to specialists in fields touched on in the book. A historical novel set in sixteenth-century Germany will be reviewed by the famous theologian Dr. Myron Curtain, who points out that the novelist, for all his technical ability—a trivial thing—has ignored the correspondence between Luther and Erasmus concerning indulgences. Or a novel in which the chief character is a physicist will

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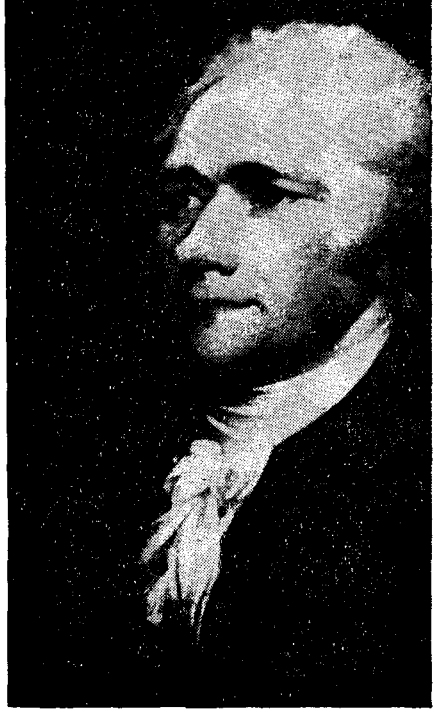

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be reviewed by a professor from M.I.T. whose only literary qualification is that he did two splendid papers on ion scattering. When, for instance, my last novel, *The Forger,* appeared, since its main characters were artists it was reviewed in a syndicated newspaper column called "Inside Art" by Meyer and Eli Levin. They took the opportunity to chide me for my ignorance of art. "A talented hack artist decides to forge a Giorgione," they said. "This is absurd already [*sic*] because of almost all the artists who ever lived, Giorgione had a technique that was the most developed. Furthermore, the quality of his work was much too great to be approximated."

On the other hand, novels are often reviewed by staff members who are either too overworked to read more than the jacket blurb of a book, or who are far more concerned with maintaining the anonymous editorial style and tone of the magazine for which they work than with the task of reviewing. *Time,* for instance, sets itself the duty of interpreting Everything for Everybody, which leads to unfortunate generalizations as untrue as they are maddening to an author. *Time* loves to invent literary "schools" or trends or types. In reviewing Shirley Ann Grau's book, *The House on Coliseum Street, Time's* Arbiter said that she was "a master of the Soft-Focus School of fiction," without, however, noting any other students or faculty. In a review of John Steinbeck's *The Winter of Our Discontent,* in the same issue, Anonymous became terribly upset because he couldn't lump all of Mr. Steinbeck's novels into a single category. "Steinbeck sometimes seemed less at war with the unjust acts of society than with the fact of society," he complained, going on to say that one never knew just what kind of hero or situation he'd deal with next—certainly a serious flaw in a novelist. A review of my novel, *The Forger,* amounted to a perfect orgy of taxonomy. "This is the latest exposition of U. S. fiction's post-Socratic theorems: Find Thyself and Express Thyself," said he, adding that there was still another "popular precept: Pity Thyself." A bit further on he found a new school, that of the Self-Quest Novel, remarking, "Most self-quest novels are assembled with interchangeable parts." This singular statement was reinforced by examples that consisted of sentences plucked at random out of the book, without reference to their context, and assigned representative meanings: obloquy, colloquy, ecstasy and philosophy. The author who protests that all these interchangeable parts may be found in every novel would, by *Time,* be commanded to stay after School.

There are, as well, a host of other man-eaters. There are the lazy ones who, when they like a book, promptly label it "The Most Distinguished Novel of the Year." There are the literary ones, who are reminded by an author's style of Reade, Pushkin, Malory, Trollope and Hazlitt, so that the unfortunate novelist finds himself without a shred of individuality he can call his own. There are the pretentious ones whose reviews contain all the faults of which they accuse authors. The Levin review of *The Forger,* after noting that the book was full of clichés and "way-out poetic double talk," said, "Rufus views all events with a corny simple-mindedness that has the great advantage of reducing to sense the insane valueless pretensions of the New York art world that swirl around him." A dizzying feat. There are reviewers who cannot get the title right, reviewers who quarrel with the book's jacket as if it were part of the author's exertions, reviewers who cannot keep their tenses straight but discourse on prose, and reviewers who are too overcome by their own wit to devote much time to a mere book.

The only people who benefit are the owners of clipping services. Authors remain hopeful. God knows why.

PHILIP THODY *on the reception of his* JEAN-PAUL SARTRE: A Literary and Political Study.[1]

The serious reviewer has two sets of duties: one to his readers and one to the author he is discussing. He must give his readers an objective account of what the book he is reviewing says, in order that they may see whether or not it is the kind of

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book they want to read; he must say whether or not he has been convinced or moved by it, and for what reasons, in order that they may have some standard to which they can compare their future reactions; and he must say whether, in his view, the work is well or badly written, in order that they may know whether it is a pleasure or a duty that awaits them. What he must do for the author is more difficult, for he should, ideally, be able to teach him something about his own book. The author who has just read a good review of his book—I do not necessarily mean a favorable one—ought to say: "Yes, I didn't see it quite like that, but he's right. My book does say that, although I wouldn't myself have said so in quite the same way." His experience should be that of the man who does recognize his own voice when he hears it on the tape-recorder.

By a curious paradox, the reviewers of my book often came near to fulfilling their duty to the author by neglecting the first two of their duties to the reader. The large number who said that I don't like Sartre, and have written a fundamentally hostile book about him, made me realize that what I intended as a work of pure exposition and reasonable criticism must have turned, as I wrote it, into an attack. Yet I wonder whether this interpretation always stemmed from a careful reading of the text, and from a desire to present it objectively to the reader. When, for example, Philip Toynbee in the London *Observer* called it a "long puncturing of a still inflated reputation," and Anthony Hartley in the *Manchester Guardian* said that my analysis was "all the more damning for its moderation," both seemed to me to be doing less than justice to the praise that I had given *Huis-clos, Les Mains sales, Réflexions sur la Question juive,* parts of *La Nausée* and *Le Mur,* and to Sartre's courageous stand on many political issues.

They also seemed to me to fall into what I consider to be the most serious and frequent fault of all reviewers: that of distorting a book in order to make it fit their own ideas. Both reviewers, for different reasons, had got their knife into Sartre; both had been waiting for some time to give vent to their wrath; my book provided the opportunity, and was consequently reviewed in a very one-sided manner. Of course, the temptation to do this is very strong for any critic reviewing a book about an author as famous and as controversial as Sartre. And it could well be argued that most readers of the *Observer* and the *Guardian* are more interested in what Toynbee or Hartley thinks than in what Thody actually said. If there is a case for anonymity on the model of the *Times Literary Supplement,* it perhaps lies in the fact that, at least in theory, anonymity encourages objectivity.

There is, however, another reason why reviewers often give an inaccurate account of a book: they want to make their review interesting, dramatic and exciting. For example, when Alex Szogyi reviewed my book in the *New York Times Book Review* he obviously had no particular axe to grind, and might therefore have been expected to provide a fairly accurate account of it. Unfortunately—in my view—he wanted to make his review more exciting and more tendentious than the original book. He consequently exaggerated the tone of my criticism, and used a number of words like "condemnation" and "lambast" which gave quite the wrong impression. For example, he wrote that I "charge Sartre with complete moral nihilism while catering to his own personal obsessions." I do nothing of the sort. I point out that the images that Sartre uses in his novels, essays and plays reveal certain personal obsessions that he often uses very skillfully; and I note—with much less moral indignation than most critics of his work—that the end of *L'Être et le Néant* expresses a nihilistic attitude. I do not "condemn" Sartre for this, and, in fact, I go so far as to write that "the challenge to go beyond this nihilism is perhaps the most stimulating part of his moral philosophy."

Obviously I am critical of Sartre—and I may say that I have waited in vain for a reviewer to attempt the fairly simple task of replying to some of my criticisms of him—but I do not attack him. It is the failure to see this nuance which is, in my

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view, the most frequent error that reviewers of my book have made.

GLADYS SCHMITT, *on the* Time *review of her* REMBRANDT.[1]

The word "snide" has been applied so often to *Time*'s book reviews that it is something of a cliché. What is more surprising is that, under their veneer of cleverness, they can be ill-informed and logically absurd. The reviewer of my novel *Rembrandt,* after noting correctly that there are "relatively few known facts about Rembrandt's life," adds that I "scraped every document, household inventory, drawing, etching, and painting for underlying drama." The hasty reader will take from the word "scraped" an impression of pedantic thoroughness; but if the statement is examined carefully it reduces itself to these ludicrously juxtaposed propositions:

1. There are very few documents on Rembrandt's life.
2. Therefore, it is uncalled-for to consider them with particular care.

Professor Jakob Rosenberg, the eminent Rembrandt scholar, makes the following statement about the subject on which he is the chief American authority: "Rembrandt's life, with its dramatic sequence of success and disaster, offers abundant material for the novelist." Evidently the *Time* reviewer disagrees. He complains that the author has added "countless tableaux of her own" to the known facts; and, since these facts are scanty enough to be contained in three or four pages, one can only conclude that, unlike Professor Rosenberg, he does not believe that a novel should have been written on the subject at all. It does not occur to him that it is precisely because Rembrandt's life is known only in bare outline that it offers material for the novelist: massive and detailed documentation of the sort we have in Lincoln's case would prevent the creative imagination from establishing an authentic image of its own.

The word "tableau"—Webster gives its meaning as "a representation of some scene by the grouping of persons who remain silent and motionless"—is obviously used for its derogatory connotations, since the reviewer elsewhere complains that I have overdramatized each incident. But the flimsy condition of his literary sophistication is amazing. He plainly does not realize that these "tableaux" are chapters similar in structure to those of the late works of Henry James, and that the whole book, like *The Wings of the Dove,* is made up of scenes dramatized from various points of view. The *Time* reviewer is not required to like this technique, but since it is generally considered one of the milestones in the development of the modern novel, the least one would expect is that he—who makes a profession of reviewing books—would recognize it on sight.

Whatever other charges I laid myself open to in dealing with biographical material, I never dreamed I would be called to question for what actually happened. But *Time*'s reviewer does not hesitate to blame me for what he calls Rembrandt's "Job-like sufferings." "One by one," he writes, "father, mother, crippled brother and spinster sister go to their graves. Three children are either still-born or die in infancy before a sickly son survives. Then the wife dies, the child's loving nurse goes mad, an apprentice is blown to smithereens in an accident. All this Author Schmitt tells. . . ." Unfortunately, "all this" is a series of recorded facts, not an imaginary concoction to be used in a soap opera; and, if the reviewer is outraged by it, he should address his complaint not to me but to God. He is obviously too intent on making the book sound as dreary as possible to mention the contrasting elements—Rembrandt's early and spectacular rise to fame, or the highhearted courtship that ended with his marriage to a beautiful and wealthy girl from the aristocracy, or his warm association with a devoted circle of friends.

The passage quoted above continues as follows: "All this Author Schmitt tells, and sometimes poignantly." From this it would seem I was only partially successful and that my remedy would have been to be poignant more often. But here the reviewer switches arguments in midstream by point-

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ing out that "long before she gets to the real tragedies in Rembrandt's life, she has squandered the reader's ability to react." If such emotional exhaustion sets in, it is self-evident that it would come from too much rather than too little poignance; but *Time*'s reviewer is not so small-minded as to be troubled by the bugbear of inconsistency. Besides, I think he is to be congratulated that he does not see the above-mentioned losses and calamities as "real tragedies." Such fortitude on his part is an inspiring example to us all, and it is only to be regretted that Rembrandt, poor wretch that he was, could not accept his misfortunes with the same lofty spirit of detached serenity.

The underlying intellectual dishonesty of the review is made apparent by the fact that there is a legitimate aesthetic question to be raised here, a question he ignores out of unwillingness to credit the book with too much stature. The structure of my chapters is late-Jamesian; to me, this multiple point of view technique is the only one that can give the novel the architectural consistency of the drama. Still, it occurred to me at several points in the writing that what I was gaining in concentration and intensity might be too much for a book with so wide a time span, so many crucial incidents and so large a cast of characters—more than once I found myself longing for the relaxed and improvised techniques of the nineteenth-century novelist. But the reviewer cannot complain that the reader becomes emotionally exhausted without implying that there is an emotional power present to cause exhaustion. And this is criticism from a highly rarified level and might be applied with equal justification to the *Iliad* and the *Saint Matthew Passion*.

Toward the end, the reviewer pats me on the head for having "done my homework well"—a transparent device for damning me with faint praise and giving himself at the same time an air of omniscience. How would he have known if I had *not* done my homework well? He would have to study for months before he would be qualified to pass judgment on my research, and he would be better employed in brushing up on purely literary matters. But probably such an occupation would yield him little: the more I read *Time*'s book reviews, the more they remind me of the old story about the visiting orchestra conductor. He was rehearsing his men for the first time, and after a few bars of Brahms, he clapped his hands over his ears and shook his head in an agonized signal for them to stop. They began again, and the same thing happened. Finally, after the third attempt, the concertmaster said, "Won't you tell us what's the matter, Maestro? What are we doing that you don't like?" "No, no," said the Maestro, "it's nothing that you're doing. It's just that I hate music."

WILLIAM J. NEWMAN *on the reception of his* THE FUTILITARIAN SOCIETY.[1]

A discussion between an author and his reviewers—it seems odd to use the possessive—usually takes on the sound and fury of a private sectarian quarrel during which the common reader keeps a careful distance and from which he draws the conclusion that neither understands the book under consideration. Here, therefore, instead of slanging the criticizers and praising the approvers, both equally tempting, it will be best to open the argument up to wider issues rather than closing it down to fault-finding. In doing so it will be possible to reckon with the intellectual attitudes demonstrated by some of the reviewers themselves. For a few of the ideas expressed in reviews of *The Futilitarian Society* not only aroused this author's curiosity, but indicate some interesting opinions about the nature and role of conservative ideas in America.

The object of *The Futilitarian Society* is to describe the ideas of American conservatism and to demonstrate that they create an image and ideology of a fixed man, fixed society and fixed law. The book also tries to raise some questions about how effectively such conservative concepts of fixedness can be applied to the problems of an America that is so beset by change. Few reviewers denied the central theme concerning the existence and nature of con-

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servative ideas in America. But a few had difficulty in coping with the fact and problem of ideology in America. Others were bothered by a gnawing doubt about the book's liberal ethos, thus revealing their own doubts about the nature of liberalism.

The question that several reviewers raised concerning the existence of conservative ideology in America revolved around the problem of its importance and its function in American conservatism. Martin Greenberg writing in the *Reporter* and Dennis Wrong in *Commentary* agreed that there is a conservative ideology but asked if it is an important menace. "Of course not," Greenberg answered. It is not a menace, he claims, because it has no political influence and no intellectual influence; thus *The Futilitarian Society* invents "straw men on the right."

At no point did I attribute "equal importance" (Wrong) to conservative ideas and the other phenomena of conservatism. What I did say was that conservatism has many facets, one of which is its ideas. But more important is the mistake such reviewers make when they underrate the role of ideas and ideology in American conservatism today. They would grant that conservatism is an active force in America, but they cannot see that ideas play any role in that force. Certainly, there is no one-to-one relationship between its ideas and its politics. But the hatchet men perform their acts against a profoundly deep and widespread background of conservative ideology. To justify such acts, as with any political act, it is necessary to have a set of ideas. Thus conservative ideology is *one* aspect, one facet, of a complex or syndrome. But, Greenberg and Wrong would protest, these conservative ideologists have no realistic ideas on the subject of politics. Exactly. Men with unrealistic ideas can use and are using such ideas—again, as one facet of their politics—to do what they want most to do, to stop rational, willed change. And *one* way they stop such change is to convince themselves and others that rationality (for example) is hopeless, bad, a threat, et cetera. Hence the role of conservative ideas.

More serious is the revelation by some reviewers of their uncertainty about the meaning of liberalism. Louis Hacker, writing in the *New York Times Book Review,* complained in a review full of complaints that "Mr. Newman is . . . wilfully or not, obscure as to where he himself stands," and proceeded to raise questions about the nature of my liberalism. Walter Millis, in a generally favorable comment in the *Saturday Review,* also asked that the nature of my liberal ideas be explained. Dennis Wrong too weighed in on this point. My first reaction was to be surprised but pleased that my opinions had suddenly become so important. My second reaction was to wonder why. After all, the book was an analysis of conservatism (a point which Millis understood, thus his question was politely and gently put) and as such could stand without an elaborate "credo" on the part of the author. It was apparent, however, that this demand was based less on interest in my opinions—unflattering though the thought may be—than it was on the fact that the reviewers were unsure about the nature of liberalism itself and what it entails. Louis Hacker wondered if I were "prepared, in the interests of 'change,' to follow Rousseau, who produced Robespierre, or Hegel, who produced Marx and Lenin?" Mr. Wrong felt that I believed any conservative viewpoint to be "necessarily intellectually contemptible" and wished that I had suggested other intellectual foundations for a conservative ideology than those presented by the writers considered in my book—hardly my role, one would think. Mr. Greenberg thought that my attitudes were those of "radicalism without content."

It would be easy to answer these complaints. But more important than their suspicions of my opinions is the fact that these critics, still looking backward, miss the point that the division of opinion in America today has new grounds. It is not based on the *old* liberal-conservative argument but on the *new* argument between conservative ideas that postulate one concept of man, that he is or should be fixed, and liberal ideas that postulate that he is or should be free—free in the sense not of tearing up tradition gratuitously but of

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inventing, of using man's free imagination, whether in science, or art, or politics, or whatever. The breaking point is not simply on the old issues of politics and economics and welfare statism and so forth, but on fundamental concepts of what man is about. These concepts may have been lurking behind the older quarrels, but they did not emerge clearly. Today many of those quarrels are liquidated. There are some, however, who therefore assume that there is no longer any basic difference between a conservative and a liberal, or that where there is a difference it is on the old basis of standpattism. But standpattism is simply the outward form of conservatism; the protection of the *status quo* is important to a conservative, of course, but it does not tell us what the *ideas* of conservatism signify for intellectual thought. What they signify is nothing less than a particular view of man that is important to the liberal because it tells him (should tell him) something about his own view of man.

Liberals may, should and will argue among themselves about what their liberalism/radicalism ought to be. But at least they should recognize where and how deeply they differ from conservatives on an intellectual as well as on an emotional basis. There was little evidence that Mr. Greenberg and Mr. Wrong had much clarity of thought on the subject. And, it must be said, their failure was indicative of a wider confusion than that over a single book.

The old quarrels are dead but there is a new difference, one which it is important for the liberal to understand. It has been the liberal/radical or the ex-liberal/radical who has done all the writing in the past ten years about the "end of ideology." The conservative has not written about the "end of ideology." Quite the contrary, he has written an ideology. *Whose* ideology therefore has come to an end? It is a painful question. It is a painful question because if liberalism has not grasped the basic difference that distinguishes it *today* from other ideas—in this case from conservatism—then it has not taken the first step (there are many others) toward the re-orientation of itself in the world in which it lives.

WALLACE STEGNER *on a review of his* A Shooting Star.[1]

Sinclair Lewis, mauled by a reviewer, once asked what sort of profession it was that let some 3.2%, 15-watt, ignorant, illiterate son of a bitch tear your work and your reputation to shreds and get paid for it. Every writer except those godlike ones who ignore their reviews must at some time have turned gritted teeth to heaven and asked the same question. It is one thing to be reviewed as if your book were a misdemeanor; it is another to have it spoken of as an offence against decency.

Nevertheless the opportunity to reply poses unexpected problems. Who would dignify a heckler by publicly acknowledging him, or call people's attention to a bad review they might otherwise miss? The spiteful and vicious review is generally *ad hominem* hostility, a brattish bid for attention or a blow in a war between literary cliques. Under no circumstances does either one's dignity or one's interest benefit from a reply.

To illustrate how little they benefit, and for that reason only, let me cite the most hostile and (I firmly believe) most wrongheaded review that my recent novel *A Shooting Star* received. I was hunting a bad one for the purpose of rebutting it in this forum. But the worst one I found turned out to be written by a former student of mine, a boy whom I had liked at least a little and helped somewhat more. So my author's irritation began at once to turn into a teacher's attempt to understand his pupil. This was a boy who had always found it difficult to distinguish between integrity and bad manners. I had never seen him either give or take criticism without growing red and loud. And surely he was angry enough, at my book or me or something else, when he reviewed me. For him the novel is contrived, incoherent, "rather trite" and "obsessively sexual." Its characters are all "somewhat despicable," which sounds like a difficult thing to be; they are a "crass and shallow group," agonizingly uncomplicated. My female lead is "as sul-

[1] *Viking. $5.*

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lenly acrobatic as a performer in a pornographic movie," and she "has to labor under the added disadvantage of Stegner's editing, which never allows her to perform her most interesting stunts on camera."

Since I wrote this novel seriously, think its people both representative and important (however unpleasant), and believe their problems symptomatic of significant weaknesses in the affluent society, I am puzzled what to say to this boy. History or fact or opinion may be debated, but a novel depends helplessly on its author's success in giving his readers a scale model of life, complete with implicit or explicit values, that they will accept. If they don't accept it, debate is over before it begins. My enemy the reviewer in this case chooses to repudiate everything. In oral debate, in a real forum, one might force admissions from him, show up his misreadings and perhaps score a point or two through ridicule. But nothing is staler or limper than a wounded author's complaints against a review that is already ancient history. In this game, what matters is the first blow; the columns of the review media are alleys made for swift assassinations, although only the assassins use them so.

Shall I quote some of my other critics to this astonishingly angry young man? He would be passionately unimpressed. Shall I tell him (what is true) that he can't read? He knows better. Shall I ask him what a "somewhat despicable" character is, or how middle class virtue triumphs, as he erroneously says it does, in a book peopled only by the somewhat despicable? When he fails to see that the book is conceived and executed in irony, shall I try to explain to him principles of fictional control that I obviously failed to get through his head when he was a student? Do I have to point out to him (obviously I do if I reply to him at all) that I am neither my heroine nor any other character in the novel, and so do not accept their views of themselves? When he says that my heroine's problems are "all patently psychological to everybody except the author," shall I inquire, trying to keep my temper, what he thinks I thought they were? Against his charge that I use metaphorical language, shall I call in Homer and Scott Fitzgerald as character witnesses? When he says the book is obsessively sexual, and is disgusted at my heroine's antics (which he describes in a simile), is it fair for me to inquire why he is disappointed that I haven't brought the actions on stage?

I cannot answer him in these ways, or any other way, because he did not come to explicate or evaluate my book, he came to shed my blood. Behind this sort of review is not any standard of literary judgment, but aggression that needs out. The problems of the review are patently psychological to everyone but the reviewer. Having read so much father-hatred in his student writing, I am not especially surprised to find myself, as one who has stood in a position of some authority over him, getting stomped as a surrogate father.

So I return to my original contention that trying to answer a vicious review is fruitless, bootless, hopeless. It will neither set the record straight for readers nor convert the reviewer to reason and amity. Nor will it persuade those periodicals that aspire to a reputation for being "hard-hitting" that mayhem is not salable: it is. Anti-mayhem is too, if it adopts the tactics of the aggressor. But reasonable replies to unreasonable critical attacks are neither salable nor useful. With every respect for the editorial impulse that permits an author a chance at rebuttal, I think that my next argument with a critic will be with a reasonable one—one who may dislike my work but who can read, who is writing from his judgment and not from his emotions.

Nevertheless I would neither gag nor censor the assassins and the psychopaths, for to do so would risk limiting the freedom of opinion that is as essential in literature as anywhere else. I only want to be around when, as occasionally happens, one of these poniard gentry commits a book of his own. They are not likely to get their comeuppance from novelists they review, for the novelists stand only to lose by quarreling with them. But when assassins attack their fellow assassins, novelists may be excused for visiting, and revisiting, the scene of the beautiful crime.

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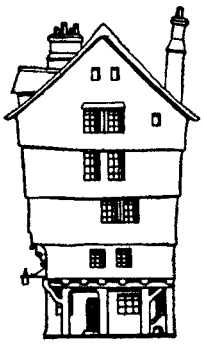

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Translation and Re-creation

PHAEDRA & FIGARO. *Verse translation of Racine's "Phèdre" by Robert Lowell. Translation of Beaumarchais' "Figaro's Marriage" by Jacques Barzun. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. $5.*

Reviewed by DUDLEY FITTS

The passionate drive of Mr. Lowell's *Phaedra,* the excitement of the verse at its best, must be attributed to the fact that the play is indeed Mr. Lowell's own, precariously disguised as a translation of Racine. Actually it is not a translation at all, but an act of re-creation; for while it is true that most of the *Phèdre* is represented here in some form or other, the elaborations, the expansions and compressions of Racine's text, amount to such a distortion of the psychology and tone of the original that comparison finally fails us and we are obliged, although gratefully, to enjoy the poem on its own terms alone. Fair enough, probably: in a sense, Mr. Lowell has done to Racine what Racine did to Euripides, although it is worth noting that Racine did not profess to translate Euripides. At the same time, Racine's innovations were chiefly structural and intellectual; there was a departure from the intention of the Greek play, to say nothing of the diction and the structure, but the admirable control of the versification preserved enough of the classical tone to keep the poem from degenerating into pathological sensationalism. *Phèdre* is morose and cold and disillusioned, but it is not sick; Mr. Lowell's *Phaedra* is unpredictable, perverse rather than morose, and somehow unhealthy in spite of its brilliant exuberance. One is reminded of Robinson Jeffers' adaptations of Euripides, although Mr. Lowell's handling is much less free, and he never permits himself the Jeffers kind of bombast. Both poets have in effect written new poems upon old themes; and Mr. Lowell's work, regarded from this point of view, is sayable and moving.

It does raise questions of translation, however, if for no other reason than because it is based upon Racine. One of them is technical, the versification. Noting that Racine has "generally and correctly" been considered untranslatable, Mr. Lowell specifies the impossibility of managing the French alexandrine in English. His solution is the decasyllabic couplet, used very loosely with frequent run-ons, shiftings of the caesura, and similar contrapuntal effects. He cites Dryden and the Restoration poets, although not as models, and indeed his verses have a certain ring of that time. Yet in spite of this looseness, the very formality of his verse—the fact that it is rhymed, for one thing—raises the Racinian ghost, a ghost that looks distinctly unhappy. Nor are matters helped by a curious kind of slap-dash at work even within such formality as exists:

> Devilish Zeus
> is easier mastered than Hippolytus;
> heaven's love-infatuated emperor
> confers less glory on his conqueror!

"Zeus / Hippolytus" is a ludicrous rhyme, although it goes without saying that the speech is not intended to be comic; and the passage is only one of many that hurt the ear and the eye. And this passage suggests another question: what is inappropriate, even in a free adaptation? Actually, the French at this point makes no mention of Zeus: Hercules is the impressionable lover involved. One hopes that Zeus was not dragged in simply for that rhyme, but there seems to be no other reason for him: Theseus the amorist is not in the least like Zeus, even to so dim a mythographer as Aricia, although in this respect he has his Herculean traits. But neither Zeus nor any of the other Greek gods that Mr. Lowell invokes belongs here; and it is even worse to waver, as Mr. Lowell does, between Venus and Aphrodite; to cite Poseidon instead of Neptune, Dionysus instead of Bacchus. And although the passage ending

> the bride of Minos, dying for the full
> magnetic April thunders of the bull

is unquestionably magnificent as rhetoric and as verse, it is really not much more than splendid nonsense—unwarranted by anything in Racine, and most inaccurate with

DUDLEY FITTS, poet, critic and translator, teaches English at Phillips Academy.

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respect to Pasiphaë: "No bride she," as *Time* would say. Such of these flaws as are emphasized by the Racinian spectre would have been reduced or obliterated altogether by a greater self-confidence in departing from the original text. Those of technic are censurable from any point of view, and there are too many of them.

It would seem, then, that Mr. Lowell has undertaken a bold enterprise and failed to execute it with sufficient daring. The work has its splendor; the *creator spiritus* of the great poet is evident on every page of it; but somehow it is diminished, reduced, by the very original that it set out to elaborate. No such obvious diminishment is incurred by Mr. Barzun. His problem is formally less difficult, of course: the Beaumarchais prose may have its perils of nuance and shifting tone, but they are perils that wit and style can deal with; there are no alexandrines to gorgonize one at the outset. But although the venture is a modest one, it is scarcely less demanding in its way; and it seems to me that Mr. Barzun has done exactly what he set out to do, with an assurance and an *élan* that Mr. Lowell does not quite match. No one that I can think of is better suited than he to tackle the "great jumping wit" of Beaumarchais (the phrase is Mr. Barzun's, and it has entertaining theological overtones); and if the sum of it all is glitter and froth, we should remember that Zeus rained in one and Aphrodite rose from the other. In any event, we have here a translation that is both a translation and a work of art that stands and moves in its own right. Both poems do, for that matter; but I am inclined to think that Mr. Barzun wins this unintentional competition.

A Proper Ecologist

THE FORGOTTEN PENINSULA. A Naturalist in Baja California. *By Joseph Wood Krutch. Sloane. $5.*

Reviewed by PAUL B. SEARS

Perhaps I should have disqualified myself for this review. I have warmed to everything of Joseph Wood Krutch's that I have read; and January last I had the privilege of cruising down the east coast of Baja California in his company. The other guests of Kenneth Bechtel (who, as the reader will discover, introduced Krutch to the Forgotten Peninsula) included Mrs. Krutch and a small group of able naturalists.

I had known vaguely that Baja is a desert peninsula whose surrounding waters sustain a rich marine fauna. I had never expected to see it. However, thanks again to Mr. Bechtel, I had had a quick and tantalizing visit by air the preceding November. Thus I was prepared to appreciate the savants in whose company I found myself.

For all his modest disclaimers, Joe Krutch held his own among them. He knows the desert flora and a great deal else. He had read deeply and well a literature of exploration and attempted exploitation that began some three decades after the discovery of America. He had visited many of the small and dwindling settlements, the ruins and the little ranches that manage an unbelievably simple existence. And because he likes people, he got inside of much that he saw.

More than most observers he has a sense of process, brought over, I like to think, from his earlier incarnation as a student of drama. A proper ecologist, he sees not only what is in a landscape, but what is going on there.

Allowing for downs as well as ups, Baja has been slowly rising from the sea during the Tertiary and Pleistocene periods. Its layers of volcanic stuff and marine deposits have furnished a stern yet not forbidding welcome to an array of plant families. Probably stemming from the humid tropics, these have gradually evolved into the modern desert flora. A great chapter in the history of climate and vegetation may lie beneath the surface of this rugged land.

European soldiers, entrepreneurs, engineers and devoted priests have tried to make the most of Baja in the way of material advantage and spiritual conquest. But the new ways and the microbial camp fol-

✪ PAUL B. SEARS, retired chairman of the Conservation Program, Yale University, and a member of the National Science Board, has published many books and articles on ecology and conservation.

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lowers they brought only succeeded in near extermination of the original inhabitants. Repeated attempts to exploit mineral resources have failed, save perhaps for an island of bauxite that the redoubtable Mr. Kaiser is scooping into ships and a busy salt works at Scammon Lagoon, famous breeding ground of the gray whale. At a rare oasis, dates and other products are being grown.

A paved road extending some hundred miles south from the California border is bringing some of the more garish "benefits of tourism" but beyond its terminus land travel is precarious business. The more affluent fly or cruise down for the superb fishing and a few, including Erle Stanley Gardner and John Steinbeck, to see, enjoy and describe. But for the most part the difficulties of travel and the tastes of the average tourist have, as Mr. Krutch points out, preserved one of those rare areas that remain much as they were before the neotechnical revolution.

In this fact our philosopher-humanist-naturalist finds a foil for his appraisal of our own urbanized, mechanized and breathless civilization in his final chapter "Baja and Progress." This, with the entertaining pages of adventure, observation, history and good pictures that paved the way for it, I leave to the reader's enjoyment. So do I the disarming simplicity and quiet humor of the style. It is, as they say, the man.

A Thoroughgoing Professional

VAN GOGH: A SELF-PORTRAIT. *Letters selected by W. H. Auden. New York Graphic Society. $10.*

Reviewed by FRANK GETLEIN

In his preface to this selection from the complete, three-volume edition of Van Gogh's letters, W. H. Auden explains the guiding principle he used to follow a single channel through the torrent of letter writing the painter carried on. "What," the poet asked himself, "is the single most important fact about Van Gogh? To that there seemed only one answer—That he painted pictures."

This seems obvious enough, yet it is a truth that has frequently been lost since 1890 and not only by Hollywood and the writers of artist-novels. In America particularly, the whole French art generation of Van Gogh has become a kind of mass culture hero, less for the works of art actually produced than for such irrelevancies as defiance of bourgeois conformism and personal hardship heroically endured for the sake of belief in one's work. These are estimable virtues, especially the second, but they have little to do with either the appreciation or the production of art. Confusion on the point is dangerous. Probably it doesn't matter much that movie-goers and readers of commercial fiction have found Van Gogh a pathetic or even tragic hero whose life and hard times pleasurably excite their sorrow and sympathy. The confusion, however, passed into art production itself. The American painting of the 1950's —specifically "action painting" as theorized by Harold Rosenberg—is the logical result of the extensive hagiography developed earlier about the heroism of the men of Van Gogh's generation. The act of defiance and the act of painting are totally identified, to their mutual disadvantage.

Van Gogh, of course, has always occupied a special place in the hagiography. Hence, this excellent selection of the letters of Van Gogh as a painter has a special value beyond its considerable inherent interest. The book is beautifully put together, both by Auden, who interleaves the letters with contemporary comment by people who knew the painter, and by the New York Graphic Society, also publisher of the complete letters, which has included two dozen drawings and eight tip-in color plates.

The artist as artist comes through clear and strong; the languishing victim all but disappears. The concentration is upon the painter. We read of Vincent's discussions with other painters, his ideas about paint-

✪ FRANK GETLEIN is the art critic of the *Washington Star,* a contributing editor of the *New Republic* and the author of *A Modern Demonology, Movies, Morals and Art* and *Christianity in Modern Art.*

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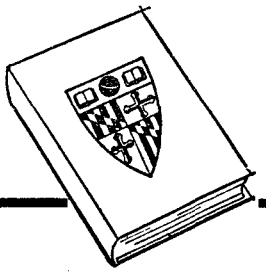
Hopkins  *Books*

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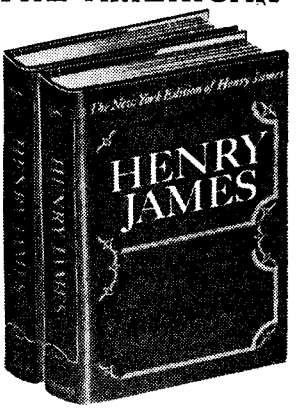

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ing and about artist communities, his study of and observations upon artists of the past from whose work he learned. There isn't a hint of self-expression as the end of a noble soul. Van Gogh is technical and practical; when he becomes "poetic" it is about some phenomenon or milieu *outside himself* that he hopes to get on canvas.

In short, despite his famous record as a poor seller, Van Gogh was a thoroughgoing professional in his approach to art. It is one of the giant ironies of art history that so much amateur painting and amateur blather about painting has been derived from his alleged inspiration.

The Intellectual in French Fiction

THE INTELLECTUAL HERO: Studies in the French Novel, 1880-1955. *By Victor Brombert. Lippincott. $5.*

Reviewed by HENRI PEYRE

In a famous interview that he gave toward the end of World War II, André Malraux voiced his confidence in the future of an Atlantic culture, common to the two shores of the Atlantic Ocean, in which American literature would play an original part as the first literature whose authors were not intellectuals. From Henry James to Thornton Wilder and Robert Penn Warren, even to James Baldwin and Saul Bellow, there is no dearth of intellectuals who have left their mark on American fiction. But they have almost always refrained from portraying intellectuals as their heroes. Perhaps they are afraid it would be too easy. Endowing a moronic buffoon or an idiot with three-dimensional life as Dostoevski and Faulkner have done may require more creative power than the delineation of characters like those of Anatole France, André Gide and Aldous Huxley, who analyze themselves and confide amorously to their narcissistic diaries.

✪ HENRI PEYRE, professor of French at Yale University, was president of the Modern Language Association in 1960. His most recent book, published in September, is *Observations,* a collection of his essays "on Life, Literature, and Learning in America."

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The notion of the intellectual, implicit in the Encyclopedists' thinking, crept into the French novel with Balzac, Flaubert, the tragic rebel Jules Vallès, then Paul Bourget, Maurice Barrès, Anatole France, Romain Rolland, from 1880 onward. The determining influences were those of Taine and Renan, and of the Dreyfus case. Victor Brombert's study of the last two decades of the nineteenth century in French fiction is rich, perceptive, original. He makes a valuable contribution to the history of ideas, following the birth and the quick fortune of the substantive "intellectual," and of the notion connoted by the term. Many French novelists, affiliated with the political Right, have satirized the intellectual, who is usually a professor. But many a Leftist has proved even more severe. The masses forgive or respect rank and wealth more easily than intellectual superiority. Several of the intellectual heroes conjured up in Brombert's vivid pages have been branded as arrogant, vacillating, born traitors to any cause, especially that of the people, incapable of any commitment.

In the first half of the present century, the intellectual heroes most strikingly depicted in French fiction are Jean Barois, in Martin du Gard's profound and moving masterpiece, Cripure in Louis Guilloux's *Le Sang Noir,* a direct ancestor of the hero of *La Nausée,* and then characters in Malraux, Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. Camus, for reasons that Brombert elucidates with subtlety, avoided intellectuals in his fiction. The chapters on "Malraux, Passion and Intellect" and on "The Intellectual as an 'Impossible' Hero" in Sartre are extraordinarily good; the best, probably, written in English on those two authors.

Brombert's volume does singular honor to American scholarship. It rests on a deep familiarity with philosophy, history and literature, of France first, but also of Russia, England and America. It treats a new and vital theme with courage, shirking no difficulty, but also with modesty, impartiality and tact. It is written with never a touch of pedantry and in a lucid and elegant prose. It is the work of a young, but already mature master.

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BEYOND THE REACH OF SENSE. *By Rosalind Heywood. Dutton. $3.95.*
CHALLENGE OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH. *By Gardner Murphy. Harper. $6.*

Reviewed by RALPH W. GERARD

Thomas Huxley stated the major value of science when he prayed for "courage to face a fact though it slay me." And ample cases in scientific history attest the difficulty of doing this, for the radically different is always suspect. But vastly greater is the roster of "facts" or interpretations that were once seriously accepted and later disproved, or were urged by significant groups but never accepted—and rightly so.

Any scientist today, even slightly in the public eye, is deluged with observations and explanations that he cannot possibly examine with any care. There just isn't time, most are patently from unbalanced cranks, usually they have turned up before, and so on. No self-respecting scientist wishes to be a bigot, nor yet a dupe; he regards the work of his colleagues, as has been said, with quarrelsome interest. The problem in each case is the proportion of quarrelsomeness and of interest.

Mrs. Heywood and Dr. Murphy have written valuable books. Each has made every effort to review fairly and critically the evidence that has accumulated in approximately eighty years for the existence of "psychic" or psi phenomena. So far as I know, their presentations are factual and there is reason to accept certain observations—anecdotal or experimental—as having been made. How are these observations to be regarded? As a result of dishonesty? No. Of self-delusion? No. Of unrecognized factors? Perhaps—the unintended cues from the early Rhine cards are an example. As misinterpretations? Yes, in my judgment.

The lines of acceptance and rejection have been drawn in terms of the historical struggle between magic and animism on

✪ DR. RALPH W. GERARD is director of laboratories at the Mental Health Research Institute and professor of neurophysiology, University of Michigan.

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the one side, and science and lawfulness on the other. This causes an intolerable bind; for if phenomena violate the laws of causality and sequence and matter and energy, which are of the very nature of scientific evidence and proof, how can such phenomena be used for "proof" in the usual mode of thought? The findings of telepathy imply a means of interaction between two minds that is foreign to all known means, one that does not fade with distance, for example. When Faraday discovered induced electric currents this was also "outside our philosophy"; but these phenomena were firm, reproducible, quantitatively defined, and in a few short years won full acceptance and important application—witness the motor and generator. Telepathy, on the contrary, is just the start of many more, and more disturbing, claims. Not only can a mind be influenced in unknown ways by other operating minds; it can also be influenced by surviving minds or souls, by material objects at a distance, by events that have yet to occur, and, in turn, it can move material objects and influence events in general. Here, indeed, is the grin without the cat.

It is argued that good scientists have accepted these conclusions. So far as I know, no scientist whose studies have given him expert knowledge of the brain and how it works goes along for one moment. Most, indeed, brush the whole matter aside as some mess for others to put right eventually. Others are worried, do not see how to progress at present toward a resolution, but continue to expect some other answer than that the fabric of science is rotten. We do not know the statistical weight of highly specific "telepathized" material; since the sample universe is not known, redundancy is possible, other factors, such as common past experience, are involved, and the like. When, the obverse, vast numbers of trials show a convincingly significant but quantitatively small deviation from chance expectation, again other possibilities exist. When a million tosses of a coin give 55 per cent heads, we do not impugn gravity or chance but conclude that the coin is weighted a bit.

Perhaps the disturbing findings will settle

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into a comfortable naturalistic framework when further scientific developments give us a new insight. A few human eyes, for example, have a little of the ability of the bee to respond to the polarization of light. In 1628 Harvey applied the new knowledge of pumps and fluid flow to the heart and blood vessels. He "milked" a vein in the hand toward the heart and proved that an unlimited amount of blood could thus be pumped along it. A century later, Monro proved on the same sort of evidence—by "milking" the phrenic nerve toward the diaphragm to make it contract—that a fluid passed along nerve tubes. His conclusion was completely convincing, and completely wrong; another century and a half had to elapse before the knowledge of electric currents and tissue excitability made the present picture of the nerve impulse possible. Monro's facts are still valid, but we can now interpret them easily and conformably.

This Innocent Pleasure

THE DELIGHTS OF DETECTION. *Edited and with an introduction by Jacques Barzun. Criterion. $5.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD D. RADIN

In his introduction to *The Delights of Detection,* a collection of seventeen short stories by as many different writers, editor Jacques Barzun does more than give his reasons for making his particular selections. Heading his essay, "Detection and the Literary Art," Mr. Barzun rebukes those intellectual snobs who condemn the detective story as a form of cheap entertainment, unworthy of respect and talent. Curiously, I have found in my own experience that many of these people either have not read detective stories, or else cite shoddy examples as reasons for their opinions, conveniently overlooking the fact that potboilers afflict every field of literature.

At the same time Mr. Barzun exhibits a bias of his own. The detective story has

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EDWARD D. RADIN, one of the founders of the Mystery Writers of America, is also a writer in the true-crime field. His latest book is *Lizzie Borden: The Untold Story.*

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many accepted forms ranging from the classic puzzle through such mutations as the suspense story, the thriller, the chase, the police procedure type and the wholly feminine had-I-but-known school of writing. Fans of the genre normally enjoy stories in many of the categories. Mr. Barzun brushes aside all but the puzzle stories. To him, these are the only ones worthy of attention and worthy of the name, detective stories. It is true that Edgar Allan Poe created the detective story and, in the too few stories he wrote, set the pattern that all writers still follow, but to demand too rigid a pattern in the Poe manner would deny the detective story an ability to grow and expand, and if the detective story is literary art, as Mr. Barzun assures us it is, then it cannot be kept in a strait jacket of form but must be allowed to seek new methods of expression as does all literature.

Mr. Barzun defines the detective story as a tale. "The pleasure it affords is that of any narrative in which the ancient riddle of who is who unravels itself to an accompaniment of worldly wisdom. In the detective tale proper there is a double satisfaction answering a double curiosity—what can the solution be? and how was the solution arrived at? But to recapture this innocent pleasure one must be sophisticated enough to abdicate other sophistications."

Within these limitations, Mr. Barzun has put together a volume that will serve as an excellent introduction to the delights of the detective story, and it contains many stories that will delight those who are already fans. Mr. Barzun did stub his toe somewhat in selecting "The Bottomless Well" by Gilbert K. Chesterton. While it is difficult to find Chesterton stories that are not too familiar, this is indeed one of the lesser Chesterton tales and far inferior to his others. It has been avoided by most anthologists for this reason and also because it ends with a shocking racial diatribe that is pointless as far as the plot is concerned and serves only to expose a flaw in Chesterton's character.

A detective story is artificial in that it ends with the exposure of the villain, the act of detection. In real life, as we know, this often is only the beginning of the story.

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—EDITOR

The 30th Anniversary issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR is a "cover-to-cover" achievement. Congratulations.

GORDON R. CLAPP
New York, New York

* * *

H. Stuart Hughes is to be congratulated on "Why We Had No Dreyfus Cases," [AS: Autumn, 1961]. Recent months have witnessed a number of articles assessing the legacy of the McCarthy Era and expressing hopes that some sort of corner has recently been turned. But none, in my opinion, has succeeded nearly so well in isolating the complex causes of the country's "moral numbness" in a time of supreme crisis.

As Mr. Hughes suggests, although McCarthy "lost" the Army-McCarthy Hearings and was subsequently censured, in a broader and more permanent sense he "won." In this connection, I think I understand what he means about the lost decade of political awareness, 1948-1957. As a person who came of political age during those years, I can testify that I didn't know what I was missing. The activities of the new student generation are evidence that the ten-year slumber is over. Let us rejoice!

NORMAN DORSEN
New York University

* * *

Really, reading that editorial by Professor Hughes makes one despair of the static, old-fashioned "liberal," still pulling about him the rags of outmoded doctrines and nineteenth-century religions: Keynes, Marx, probably Freud too.

The young, of course, have abandoned these as exploded and quaint. *They* recognize reality: the Reds are playing for keeps; these Communists are not just an interesting sect, for whom one should have a small soft spot because they're on the right side, and people one used to know had joined them. They want to kill us and our children. They want to bury us. They want to enslave us.

Professor Hughes's tired clichés of the past represent all that is wrong with the doctrinaires still left over in high places, who still wonder whether Chambers should have informed on Hiss!

LUCETTE WILLIAMS
Milton, Massachusetts

* * *

Congratulations on Stuart Hughes's article, "Why We Had No Dreyfus Case." I enjoyed it very much, and am in general agreement with most of the points he makes.

While I recognize the fact that he did not have unlimited space, I am sorry that he did not carry the analysis further: the subject is important enough to justify more comment. In McCarthy's war with the United States, it was McCarthy who won, and the consequences of his victory are being embedded in our court decisions, the statutes of our states and local governments, and the employment policies of major corporations and educational institutions. It is my considered opinion that he, single-handed, did more harm to the United States than all the members of the Communist Party put together. He established the principle that the government can properly concern itself with the most intimate details of a citizen's private life; it can punish citizens for opinions, associations and casual remarks; it can punish anyone as guilty who cannot prove his innocence; and it can—in fact, if not in theory—punish for acts that were not crimes when committed.

As far as I was concerned, the psychological handicap that prevented effective counterattack was not guilt feelings but a sense of utter im-

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potence and bewilderment. McCarthy started with a raid on the traditions that we took for granted as the basis for social action, and on the only techniques that have traditionally been available to liberals for self-defense. When this raid was successful, no effective opposition was possible.

More specifically, McCarthy started by attacking the fundamental assumption that underlies our government—the assumption that it is not only possible but desirable for men of very diverse political, religious and economic beliefs to co-operate in mutually advantageous movements, with mutual tolerance. When McCarthy convinced the conservatives that they were surrounded by traitors, he destroyed the basis for action that we had always taken for granted. When it became obvious that the conservatives actually believed that anyone to the left of Robert A. Taft was an agent of Moscow, unfit for public office or private trust, they found themselves facing a reflection of their own suspicion and hostility and intolerance. (I am afraid that I shall never quite recover my former respect for some of my friends who rushed to display their gullibility, and made it plain that they were going to view everyone—including me—with deep suspicion until we had proven our loyalty by taking a lot of oaths. Why, after all, should I not have demanded that they prove *their* loyalty to *my* satisfaction?)

When the principle of guilt by association was accepted, the confusion was complete. Everyone is associated with everyone else, if one wishes to trace the connections far enough, so there is no hope of defense from any charge. The requirement that no one join any movement that might possibly contain Communists or share goals that were approved by Communists would, of course, make the United States impossible: most of our most essential activities are initiated, regulated or actually carried out by voluntary associations of individuals who cannot possibly inquire into, or control, the opinions of their associates in other fields. From the Red Cross to the American Medical Association, from the Community Chest to the village volunteer fire department, from the Republican Party to the PTA and the AAASC, America is webbed with organizations that almost certainly have contained Communists but that have nevertheless done very useful things. When McCarthy's victims tried to defend themselves, their instinctive reaction was to form committees, parties or action groups—only to find that their one effective weapon was use-

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less. Once the principle of guilt by association was established, it was suicidal for anyone to associate himself with the defense of anyone whom he did not know personally and whose acquittal was not absolutely certain.

Finally, McCarthy's success in convincing our ruling elite that "Communist Sympathizers" were the same as Communists, if not worse, deprived us of our last resort: the appeal to public opinion. One cannot debate controversial issues if no one is willing to present the unpopular side of the argument—and no sane person will destroy himself and his family for the small pleasure of infuriating his neighbors, when no greater gain seems possible.

In my own experience, a feeling of complete frustration resulted from having everything produce just the opposite results from the ones that one might have reasonably expected. I tried to defend the best and oldest of American traditions—and found myself furiously attacked by the very conservatives who claimed to worship them. I tried to make some small contribution to free speech and legal justice by donating to the defense of a few controversial figures —and found that I had destroyed all my usefulness for further action by getting on the mailing lists of a lot of groups denounced by the Attorney General. I tried to maintain a local tradition of free discussion by taking the unpopular side of a few debates—and found that I had branded myself publicly as a "Communist Sympathizer."

Basically, our error was in trying to defend ourselves against specific charges. There could be no defense, because we all were guilty—just as McCarthy was guilty. Everyone is "potentially disloyal"—if only because everyone is potentially insane. Everyone is guilty of anything you wish—if you accept the principle of guilt by association. And everyone should be guilty of being a Communist sympathizer: every human being should feel some sympathy for every other human being, and if our official statements are true, Communists deserve more sympathy than anybody. Our only defense should have been, "So what?"

WM. PALMER TAYLOR
Hamilton, Ohio

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If I may be permitted to enter a small motion to the distinguished house writing on "Outstanding Books, 1931-61" in the fall AMERICAN SCHOLAR, I should like to recommend to the general interest *Stalingrad,* a novel by Theodor Plievier.

While I would not presume to guess how long this work may live, I hope it will for a long time because of the profound question it raises for a time in which manipulation of people, individually and en masse, has become, as it were, S.O.P. The question Plievier poses is that of the leader's responsibility for the led; it is the unquiet thing that remains to haunt one after reading this *All Quiet* of World War II.

MAURICE FLAGG
Arlington, Virginia

* * *

The Autumn issue is the first I have seen of this quarterly for about thirteen years. It was with the greatest pleasure that I read the many interesting and amusing articles in it. I have observed the Washington scene since 1945 at close range. I found the comments in the articles by Shannon, Rovere (funniest thing I have read for a year), Kazin, Butler, Wallich and (for the most part) May going straight home. It is refreshing to know that one periodical has many well and accurately informed thinkers at its disposal. It is essential that those interested in public affairs who do not have access to people and information in Washington directly have a sane place to which to turn for information and the discussion of important issues. Other publications appear somewhat less interested in forthright talk than you do and more interested in selling a point of view without regard to important facts. Congratulations.

DIANA W. BIRD
McLean, Virginia

* * *

In anything so seminal as Mr. Rovere's proto-study of the Establishment [AS: Autumn, 1961], I think it is important, particularly in anticipation of future bibliographical footnotes to monographs of the Dutchess County School, that the Establishment's central book should be accurately described. The plural *Prospects For America* indicates a more random future than we might hope for. The correct title is singular: *Prospect For America.*

RICHARD K. WINSLOW
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* * *

I have received my first issue [AS: Autumn, 1961] and want you to know how very pleased I am with your journal. It's wonderful!

JANE G. KERNER
Chicago, Illinois

* * *

The fall issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR I feel is especially fine. I always enjoy each issue but from time to time one will be particularly informative and valuable and such is the last one.

MILDRED S. TITLEY
Oaxaca, Mexico

* * *

Preceding Hilary Masters ("Works like 'Establishment Watering Places,' a first-rate monograph by Hilary Masters" in Richard Rovere's "Notes on the Establishment in America") was Ring Lardner, ingenious cabalist, who disguised his occult penetration into the secrets of the American society under Baconian disguises. Note these lines in the Preface to *How to Write Short Stories:*

" 'Where was you?' asked Edith Quaver.

" 'To the taxidermist's,' replied Dorothy Abbott.

"The two girls were spending the heated term *at a famous watering trough.*" (The italics are mine.)

RALPH BLOCK
Washington, D. C.

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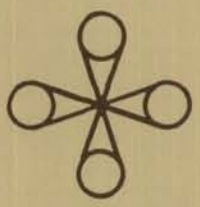

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